



# *The theatres of Paris*

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Del. et Grav. par  
G. et C. Lacauchie



THE  
**THEATRES**  
OF  
PARIS.

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**THEATRES**

OF  
**PARIS,**

BY  
**CHARLES HERVEY.**

REVISED AND CORRECTED EDITION,  
ILLUSTRATED WITH ORIGINAL PORTRAITS

OF  
**Eminent Living Actresses**

BY  
**ALEXANDRE LACAUCHIE.**



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## PREFACE.

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THE following pages are offered to the public in the hope that (in the absence of any more important and complete book on the same subject) they may be accepted as an imperfect attempt to describe the present state of the drama in Paris.

In the prefatory notices of the different theatres, the writer has largely availed himself of the valuable works of Brazier and Hippolyte Lucas, and has gleaned no inconsiderable store of anecdote from the amusing pages of *les Petits Mystères de l'Opéra*, and *les Mystères des Théâtres de Paris*. Many of the biographies now appear in print for the first time, and the authenticity of almost all has been guaranteed by the *artistes* themselves : in no instance, however, have critical remarks on any living performer been borrowed without acknowledgement from other works : the opinions

given, whether favourable or unfavourable, being (unless the contrary be expressly stated) in every case original.

In returning thanks to the numerous *artistes* who have assisted him in his labours, the author feels that where all have been equally courteous, it would be invidious and unjust to particularize any: he cannot, nevertheless, refrain from publicly expressing his gratitude to his excellent friend, M. Regnier, of the *Comédie Française*, for having placed at his disposal a great variety of statistical and miscellaneous information, connected as well with his own as with the other Parisian theatres.

## CHAPTER I.

### INTRODUCTORY REMARKS.

In 1795, Paris possessed no less than fifty-one theatres : of these many were soon closed or demolished, only twenty-eight existing in 1807, in which year Napoleon issued a decree, limiting the number of *salles de spectacle* in the capital to ten. At the present day there are twenty-two theatres in Paris, exclusive of those in the *banière*, viz. :

Académie Royale de Musique.

Théâtre-Français.

Opéra-Comique.

Odéon.

Italian Opera.

Vaudeville.

Variétés.

Gymnase-Dramatique.

Palais-Royal.

Porte-Saint-Martin.

Ambigu-Comique.

Gaité.

Cirque-Olympique.

Cirque des Champs-Élysées.

Théâtre-Montpensier.

Folies-Dramatiques.  
 Délassements-Comiques.  
 Beaumarchais.  
 Théâtre de M. Comte.  
 Luxembourg.  
 Funambules.  
 Petit-Lazari (1).

The first four of these, which are distinguished from the rest by the title of royal theatres, are in part supported by the government, a yearly sum of 1,160,000 francs being apportioned between them as follows.

To the Académie Royale.	. . .	620,000 frs.
— Théâtre-Français.	. . .	200,000 .
— Opéra - Comique.	. . .	240,000 .
— Odéon.	. . . . .	100,000 .
		<hr/>
Total.	. . .	1,160,000 frs.

Exclusive of a further sum of 24,200 francs, about half of which is devoted to the payment of the salaries of M. Edouard Monnaie and M. Balloz, the *commissaires de surveillance* attached, the first to the lyric theatres, and the second to the Théâtre-Français; the remainder being set apart for the liquidation of sundry expenses connected with the administration of the four theatres above mentioned, and also with that of the *Conservatoire* (2).

At the Académie Royale French operas and ballets are performed.

At the Théâtre-Français and the Odéon, tragedy, comedy, and drama.

(1) Since the above was written, a license has been granted by the Minister of the Interior to M. Adolphe Adam, the celebrated composer, for the establishment of a third lyric theatre.

(2) The *Conservatoire* of music and declamation is presided over by a director chosen by the Minister of the Interior, and placed under the *surveillance* of a special committee. The number of out-door pupils of both sexes attached to this establishment, all of whom are taught gratuitously, and by the best professors, exceeds five hundred.

In addition to these, the *Conservatoire* also supports ten male pupils, whose studies are wholly confined to vocal music, and who are lodged, fed, and clothed gratuitously.

The present director is M. Auber, the celebrated composer, and among the professors, as well vocal as dramatic, are MM. Ponchard, Bordoqui, Duprez, Michelet, Samsoo, Provost, and Beauvallet, M<sup>lle</sup> Mars and M<sup>lle</sup> Damoreau.

The titles of Opéra-Comique and Italian Opera sufficiently show the *spécialités* of those two theatres.

At the Vaudeville, Variétés, and Gymnase, short comedies, farces, and occasionally dramas interspersed with couplets, are given.

The pieces produced at the Palais-Royal are generally of a broad and humorous nature, and have little in common with those performed at the other vaudeville theatres.

The *répertoire* of the Porte-Saint-Martin is composed of dramas, vaudevilles, ballets and fairy spectacles.

Those of the Ambigu and Gaîté comprise dramas, vaudevilles, and fairy spectacles.

At the Cirque-Olympique equestrian spectacles as well as short vaudevilles are performed.

The Cirque in the Champs-Élysées resembles the arena of Astley's, and is devoted to displays of horsemanship, and to feats of strength and agility.

The privilege granted to the Théâtre Montpensier licenses the performance there of dramas, comedies, and lyric compositions.

At the Folies-Dramatiques and Délassements-Comiques, vaudevilles and farces are chiefly given.

The Beaunarchais and the Luxembourg are equally entitled to play drama and vaudeville.

At M. Comte's juvenile theatre vaudevilles and fairy spectacles are produced.

At the Funambules, short vaudevilles and pantomimes.

And lastly, at the Petit-Lazari, the performances are generally confined to vaudevilles.

The foregoing list does not include the Hippodrome, an arena for the display of horsemanship, built after the fashion of the Roman amphitheatres, outside of the barrière de l'Etoile; nor the Théâtre-Séraphin, in the Palais-Royal, an ingeniously contrived puppet-show.

M. Phillippe, the celebrated conjuror, has also a small theatre on the Boulevard Bonne-Nouvelle, and his no less clever rival, M. Robert Houdin, assisted by his son, gives entertainments during the winter in the Palais-Royal.

There are three private theatres in Paris, which may be hired for

amateur performances : these are the Salle Chantecorne, in the Rue de la Victoire; the Théâtre-Chaptal, in the Rue Chaptal; and the Ecole Lyrique, in the Rue de la Tour-d'Auvergne.

The theatres of the *ban'ieue*, or suburbs immediately adjoining Paris, are six in number, and are situated outside the barriers of Montmartre, Mont-Parnasse, Belleville, Batignolles, and at Ranelagh and Grenelle.

We subjoin a statement of the aggregate yearly receipts of the Parisian theatres, not including those of the *banlieue*, from 1814 to 1842 (1).

YEARS.	NUMBER of THEATRES.	RECEIPTS.	YEARS.	NUMBER of THEATRES.	RECEIPTS.
1814	10	4,910,487 frs.	1828	13	6,289,033 frs.
1815	11	4,921,161	1829	13	6,516,321
1816	11	4,921,579	1830	13	5,761,636
1817	11	5,090,957	1831	16	4,769,893
1818	11	5,171,280	1832	16	4,228,038
1819	11	5,126,197	1833	17	6,161,435
1820	12	4,950,431	1834	16	6,397,317
1821	13	6,103,518	1835	17	6,633,993
1822	13	6,189,618	1836	17	7,272,511
1823	13	6,048,121	1837	17	7,308,913
1824	12	6,353,653	1838	19	7,806,379
1825	12	6,688,889	1839	19	8,511,518
1826	12	6,406,731	1840	19	7,818,059
1827	13	6,267,091	1841	19	8,629,177
			1842	19	8,150,770

We shall now proceed to notice the different theatres separately, commencing with the Académie Royale de Musique.

(1) One-tenth is subtracted from the nightly receipts of each theatre in aid of the different hospitals in Paris.

## CHAPTER II.

### ACADÉMIE ROYALE DE MUSIQUE,

RUE LEPELLETIER.

*Manager, M. Lion Pillet (1).*

THE origin of the Opera in France has been traced to a decree of Charles the Ninth, dated 1570, which gives permission to his dear and well-beloved Jean-Antoine de Baif (2) and Joachim Thibaut de Courville "to establish and form, after the manner of the ancients, an academy or company, consisting as well of composers, singers, and instrumental players, as of honourable spectators." This Academy was held in the house of Baif, in the Rue des Fossés-Saint-Victor, where ballets were performed during his lifetime; but after his death the institution fell into neglect.

In 1581, the Maréchal de Brissac, Governor of Piedmont, sent to the Queen Mother, Catherine de Médicis, his valet-de-chambre, named Beaujoyeux, who was a good violin player, and who composed a ballet which was performed on the marriage of the Duc de Joyeuse with M<sup>lle</sup> de Vaudemont, the Queen's sister. He was assisted in the composition of the music and dialogue by La Chesnaye, the King's almoner, and by Beaulieu and Salomon, professors of music to the Court. The scenery was the work of the King's painter, Jacques Patin.

(1) Under the surveillance of a special committee, appointed by the Minister of the Interior.

(2) Baif was a contemporary of Bonnard and Mulherbes.



In 1645, Cardinal Mazarin sent for some Italian actors, and established them in the Rue du Petit-Bourbon; there they played and sang a pastoral in five acts, entitled *Achille à Scyros*, the author of which was Giulio Strozzi. This opera, the first produced in France, was followed in 1647 by a second, called *Orphée et Eurydice*. The Cardinal also organized a representation, composed of dances and music, which was performed in the private apartments of Louis XIV., and in which the King and the principal lords of his Court took the part of divinities, heroes, and shepherds. This so pleased the *Grand Monarque*, that by his order the poet Benserade wrote a ballet, called *Cassandre*, which was danced at the Palais-Cardinal in 1651.

A pastoral, the name of which is unknown, written by the Abbé Perrin, of Lyons, was played in 1659; Combert, organist of St. Honoré, being the composer of the music. Its success was such as to induce the author to prepare two others, the rehearsals of which were interrupted by the death of Cardinal Mazarin. About the same period *la Toison d'or*, by Corneille, was produced at the *château* of the Marquis de Sourdeac, a wealthy amateur, in association with whom Perrin and Combert obtained by letters patent, in 1669, the privilege for twelve years of forming an Academy of Music, in which dramatic pieces were to be sung before the public.

The new Academy was established in the rue Guénégaud, and *Pomone*, by the Abbé Perrin, was played there in 1671, Combert supplying the music, and the Marquis de Sourdeac the machinery. The trio, however, soon quarrelled, and the Marquis, after withdrawing his name from the association, produced jointly with the poet Gilbert, secretary to Queen Christine, *les Peines et les Plaisirs de l'Amour*. Lulli, Superintendent of music to the King, profited by this disunion, and purchased the privilege accorded to the Abbé Perrin: he then, in conjunction with the machinist Vigarani, prepared a building in the rue de Vaugirard, the first piece represented there being *les Fêtes de l'Amour et de Bacchus*, the *libretto* of which was written by Quinault.

During one of the performances, which was honoured by the presence of the King, the Prince de Condé and other great lords danced on the stage among the professional artists. The first opera in which female dancers were introduced was *le Triomphe d'Amour*, represented

in 1781, at Saint-Germain, in presence of Louis XIV. On the occasion of this brilliant *fête*, several ladies of the court were among the performers, and it was resolved that they should in future be replaced by professional *danseuses*, the female characters in the ballets having previously been sustained by men.

On Molière's death in 1673, Lulli transported his company to the theatre in the Palais-Royal, which then occupied the site of the present Rue du Lycée. He there continued his prosperous career, which he terminated in 1686, by *Armide*, considered his best work. He was succeeded in the management of the theatre by his son in law; but it soon fell into the hands of Destouches, under whose direction *Issé* was produced with such effect, that Louis XIV. declared him to be the first conductor who had not made him regret the loss of Lulli.

In the theatre of the Palais-Royal were performed, for more than a century, all the lyric tragedies and heroic ballets of Quinault, Campistron, Fontenelle, and other distinguished writers, set to music by Destouches, Labarre, etc. A *règlement*, framed at Versailles, January 11, 1719, fixes the salaries of the different performers as follows (1) :

1st counter-tenor. . . . .	1,500 livres.
2nd. . . . .	1,200 .
3rd. . . . .	1,000 .
1st tenor . . . . .	600 .
2nd. . . . .	600 .
1st actress. . . . .	1,500 .
2nd. . . . .	1,200 .

and so on in proportion. The two principal male dancers received 1,000 livres each, and the two leading *danseuses* 900 each. The conductor was paid 1,000 livres, and the dancing-master 500. According to this tariff, the author of an opera received 200 livres during the ten first representations, and 100 afterwards; and the author of a ballet 120 livres during the first ten representations, and 60 afterwards.

On December 2, 1715, the management of the Opera was granted by letters patent to the Duc d'Antin; he, however, soon resigned the of-

(1) For these and some other particulars in the present chapter, we are indebted to a series of clever papers on the Opera, which appeared some months back in the *Court Journal*.

rice, and the following reason is given. Wishing to make a present to Thévenard, then the first *artiste* of the Opera, he offered him 600 livres, which the actor indignantly refused, saying that such a gift was scarcely worthy the acceptance of his lacquey. The Duke, incensed at his refusal, felt strongly inclined to imprison him; but, fearing that such a step would exasperate the public, by whom Thévenard was idolized, he contented himself with sending in his resignation to the King, saying he would have nothing more to do with such *canaille*.

The origin of the masked balls at the Opera dates from January 2, 1716, from which day they were authorized by royal permission. Two years later, an *ordonnance* was published with reference to authors. Hitherto they could claim no admittance by right, except to the pit of the Opera house; the new decree, however, confined them to the amphitheatre, not as a mark of distinction, but in order that they might be more under the eyes of the police, who could thus prevent their hissing the pieces of their rivals, which they were able to do with impunity while mingling with the crowd in the *parterre*.

In 1738, Chassé, one of the principal singers, enjoyed a salary of 3,000 livres, besides an additional gratification of 1,000 livres: he also received 1,200 livres at Easter, and 200 livres to pay for bread, wine, and shoes.

M<sup>lle</sup> Antier, *premier sujet de chant*, had the same appointments as Chassé, but her Easter allowance was only 600 livres. Blondy, the leading dancer, had a salary of 3,000 livres, but nothing else.

M<sup>lle</sup> Cupis de Camargo had 2,200 livres, and 500 as a gratification. This *danseuse*, who was of Spanish origin (1), was received on her first appearance with such enthusiasm, that every thing was called by her name (2). Notwithstanding her brilliant *début*, however, she was forced, owing to the jealousy of her *chef d'emploi*, M<sup>lle</sup> Prévôt, to continue among the *figurantes*. Luckily for her, it chanced one night that the

(1) M<sup>lle</sup> Camargo was born April 15, 1710.

(2) Talent has still the occasional privilege of setting the fashion. We remember some three years ago seeing *caracs à la Rachel* in the window of a *mercerie* in the rue Vivienne, and not long after Frédéric Lemaitre's creation of *Don César de Bazan*, we frequently observed a crowd of *ganiss* staring with open-mouthed admiration at a most uncouth looking Spanish hat exposed for sale on the Boulevard Saint-Martin, and labelled "*Fente-Frédéric*."

principal dancer was not at his post, and missed his *entrée*. In vain the orchestra played and recommenced the symphony: no one appeared, and the audience were beginning to grow impatient, when la Camargo, as if inspired, darted on the stage and danced *à l'improviste* a Spanish *pas*, which surprised and enchanted all present.

Her contemporary, M<sup>lle</sup> Sallé, was equally celebrated: on her visit to London, a perfect hail of purses full of gold and guineas wrapped in bank notes, amounting in all to 20,000 francs (£ 800), is said to have been showered on the stage. Voltaire has thus immortalized these two famous *danseuses*:

" Ah! Camargo, que vous êtes brillante:  
Mais que Sallé, grands dieux, est ravissante:  
Que vos pas sont légers, et que les siens sont doux:  
Elle est inimitable, et vous êtes nouvelle:  
Les Nymphes sautent comme vous,  
Et les Grâces dansent comme elle!"

On April 6, 1763, the theatre in the Palais-Royal was totally destroyed by fire, and in the following year the Opera was temporarily transferred to the theatre of the Tuileries, where the company continued to perform until 1770, in which year the new Opera house, built on the original site in the Palais-Royal, was opened. The period between the inauguration of this theatre and its destruction, also by fire, in 1781, is remarkable in many ways. The ballet, under Noverre, acquired more grace and expression than had hitherto characterized it, and the musical department of the Opera was completely reformed by the arrival in Paris of Gluck, Piccini, and a company of Italian buffo singers. Gluck not only enriched the lyric stage with his *chefs-d'œuvre*, *Iphigénie en Aulide*, *Orphée*, etc., but imparted vigour, energy, and precision to the orchestra. He also taught the performers to sing in time, and to declaim the recitative with animation. Piccini introduced some sweet and touching melodies into *Atys* and *Iphigénie en Tauride*, and the buffo singers, who played three times a week, alternately with the French *artistes*, made the Parisians acquainted with the works of Sarti and Paisiello. The *Romists*, or partisans of Rameau, who had triumphed over the *Lullists*, or advocates of Lulli, were in their turn conquered, and the ancient French music was utterly annihilated.

In 1776, the Chevalier de Saint-Georges, the creole so famed as a

fencer and musician, offered, in conjunction with a company of capitalists, to undertake the management of the Opera; and his offer would probably have been accepted, had not MM<sup>les</sup> Sophie Arnould, Guimard, etc., addressed a petition to the Queen, praying Her Majesty to represent to the King that their *honour* would not allow them to submit to be managed by a mulatto. In consequence of this appeal, the offer of the Chevalier was rejected, and the management of the Opera entrusted, from 1778 to 1780, to Viseney de Volgay.

Among the celebrated singers of that day were M<sup>me</sup> St. Huberty and M<sup>lle</sup> La Guerre, the latter of whom was the original *Iphigénie* in Gluck's *Iphigénie en Aulide*. One evening, after having dined well, as was her custom, she came on the stage in such a state of exhilaration, as to draw the remark from a spectator that "M<sup>lle</sup> La Guerre was not playing *Iphigénie en Aulide*, but *Iphigénie en Champagne*."

After the second conflagration of the Opera House in 1784, the company removed to the théâtre de la Porte-Saint-Martin, which had been hastily erected in little more than two months, and recommenced their performances on 27 Oct. of the same year. Among the chief novelties produced were la *Cararane*, by Grétry, *Œdipe à Colonne*, by Sacchini, and the ballets of *Télémaque* and *Psyché*, by Gardel. Then flourished Vestris the elder, who modestly called himself "le *Dieu* de la danse," and said publicly, "I only know three great men in Europe, the King of Prussia, M. de Voltaire, and myself (1)." His son, who far surpassed him in talent, was long called *Vestralard* (2), but on his attaining the age of eighteen, his father, wishing to bestow on him a sovereign mark of his favour, allowed him to bear the name of Vestris. "If my son does not spring higher," said the *Dieu* in a fit of enthusiasm, while watching Vestris the younger dance, "it is because he is unwilling to humble his comrades too much, for were he to mount as high as he could, he would be *ennuyé* while in the air for want of conversation."

The famous Sophie Arnould, to whom Déjazet in our own day has

(1) "There are thorns as well as roses in my profession," said he in reply to a friend who was expatiating on the happiness of being a public favourite. "I assure you, sometimes I begin to think that I would rather be a simple captain in a cavalry regiment than what I am."

(2) His mother was M<sup>me</sup> Allard, a *dansusee*.

been compared for witty sayings and doings, after a long and successful career, died without fortune in 1802. A few years before the revolution, she purchased for her own residence the religious house which formerly belonged to the penitents of St. Francis, at Luzarches, and having selected a spot in one of the cloisters for her tomb, caused the following verse from Scripture to be inscribed there :

" Beaucoup de péchés lui seront remis, parce qu'elle a beaucoup aimé." (1)

Another of the celebrated *filles de l'Opéra*, as they were then termed, was La Guimard, the mistress of the Marshal Prince de Soubise : she lived in the greatest luxury, and gave three suppers a week, to one of which she invited the first lords of the court, to another the cleverest authors and artists of the capital, and to the third the prettiest girls in Paris. With all her faults, La Guimard was naturally of a generous and charitable disposition, as the following anecdote will show. One day, after receiving a present of 2,000 crowns from a wealthy nobleman, she chanced to visit an obscure part of the city, and was so touched with the misery of the inhabitants of the quarter, who were suffering from excessive cold and hunger, that she distributed the entire sum among them.

Few *danseuses* or even *figurantes* in those days had any difficulty in meeting with wealthy and liberal protectors, by whom their slightest wish was eagerly anticipated. One of La Guimard's contemporaries, M<sup>lle</sup> Grandi, was complaining in the *foyer de la danse* of the loss of a lover who had given her 20,000 livres in five weeks ; she was at the time surrounded by a numerous train of adorers, one of whom remarked to her that the loss could easily be replaced. Next day, a splendid carriage, drawn by two beautiful horses, and followed by three others richly caparisoned, arrived at her door : in the interior of the vehicle were several weighty bags, containing no less than 30,000 livres in specie.

Up to the revolution, the costume both of the singers and dancers

(1) Sophie Arnould was born in 1733, and was educated at the convent of Val-de-Girée, where M<sup>lle</sup> de Valois, daughter of the Regent, was also brought up. It was owing to the patronage of this Princess that the future prima donna obtained permission to sing in the *chapelle royale*, where her beautiful voice attracted the notice of M<sup>me</sup> de Pompadour, and procured her an engagement at the Opera.

was extremely ridiculous and unbecoming : Achilles, Apollo, Bayard, and the shepherd Paris, were indiscriminately *coiffés* with powdered wigs, and Venus, Iphigénie, the three Graces, and even Jeanne d'Arc, appeared in hoops.

During the reign of terror, Laisnez and others were threatened by the general Henriot with the guillotine, because in his opinion they did not sing the patriotic hymns with sufficient warmth and enthusiasm : Henriot, who styled himself the protector of the fine arts, had, it must be confessed, a singular way of bestowing his protection.

The Opera, which was then called the *Théâtre des Arts*, and which was managed at that time by the performers themselves, was transferred in 1795 to the new theatre erected by M<sup>re</sup> Montansier, opposite to the *Bibliothèque Royale*, in the Rue de la Loi, now Rue de Richelieu. The Government contrived to obtain possession of this building, under the pretence that its proximity to the National Library might endanger the safety of the latter in case of fire : once in their hands, however, they allowed the performances to continue. The Opera then took the name of *Théâtre de la République et des Arts*, which was subsequently changed to that of *Opera* : this in its turn gave way to the pompous title of "Imperial Academy of Music." During the Consulate and the Empire, the only successful compositions produced were Haydn's oratorio of the *Creation*, la *Vestale* and *Fernand-Cortez*, by Spontini, and one or two others of less note : the artists of talent were also comparatively few in number.

Two important events occurred during the existence of the Opera in Rue Richelieu : first, the narrow escape of Napoleon, while on his way thither, from the infernal machine in the rue Saint-Nicaise; and secondly, February 13, 1820, the assassination of the Duc de Berry by Louvel, as he was stepping into his carriage at the door of the theatre. After this catastrophe, the Opera, which at the Restoration had resumed its former title of *Académie Royale de Musique*, was transferred to the present structure, erected provisionally in the Rue Lepelletier, on the site of the gardeus of the hôtel Choiseul. The old theatre in the Rue Richelieu was destroyed to make room for a chapel in memory of the Duc de Berry, which was in its turn removed after the revolution of 1830.

On the installation of the Opera in Rue Lepelletier, the Viscount Sos-

thène de La Rochefoucauld was appointed manager : the efforts of this nobleman were principally directed towards improving the *morals* of the *danseuses*. He was succeeded by M. Lubbert, a great *dilettante*, so fond of Italian music that he would seldom allow an opera by a French composer to be represented, *la Muette de Portici* being one of the few privileged exceptions. Rossini was then at the height of his popularity ; his *Moïse*, *le Comte Ory*, and *Guillaume Tell* attracted crowds to the Académie Royale, and among the artists who in part contributed to the success of these *chef-d'œuvre* by their talent, were Levasseur and Adolphe Nourrit.

Let us for a moment retrace our steps, that we may briefly mention the principal glories of the Opera at the time of the Restoration : among these M<sup>me</sup> Branchu, the Malibran of her day, deserves a prominent place. Being admitted at an early age into the Conservatoire, she became a pupil of Dugazon and Garat, and on the completion of her studies appeared at the Opera, where she created a perfect *furor* by her singing in *la Vestale*, *Armide*, etc. In private life, she was highly respected, and was honoured with the friendship of the Empress Joséphine.

At that time the *dieux de la danse* were Albert, Paul, and Ferdinand ; the second of these, surnamed *l'aérien*, has been thus described : " Paul used to spring and bound upwards, and was continually in the clouds : his foot scarcely touched the earth or rather the stage : he darted up from the ground and came down again perpendicularly, after travelling a quarter of an hour in the air." (1). Ferdinand in vain endeavoured to contend against his rival *the Zephyr* ; with all his agility he could never equal the elastic spring of Paul. As to Albert, he was more remarkable for the grace of his pantomime than for any extraordinary activity as a dancer. After these came Montessu and his wife ; the latter of whom, sister of Paul, acquired a celebrity scarcely inferior to that of her brother. Nor must we omit the pretty M<sup>lle</sup> Brocard, more renowned as a beauty than as a *danseuse*, Coulon, to whose excellent tuition the graceful and elegant Duvernay owed much of her success, and the sisters Noblet.

(1) This celebrated artist is now a *maître de danse* at Brighton



But the golden days of the ballet were yet to come : July 23, 1827, Marie Taglioni made her first appearance before a Parisian public, and more than justified the brilliant reputation which had preceded her. This admirable *artiste* is by her mother's side grand-daughter of Karsten, the celebrated Swedish tragedian ; her father, formerly a dancer at Naples, is now a distinguished composer of ballets. Marie Taglioni, though born at Stockholm, was educated in France ; in 1822, at the age of fourteen, she commenced her career at Vienna, and, by the grace and poetry of her dancing, completely eclipsed Heberlé, at that time a favourite in the Austrian capital. Her father had arranged a *pas* for her *début*, but in her confusion she forgot it, and substituted one of her own invention, which took the house by storm. From Vienna she went to Stuttgart, where she was treated like a sister by the Queen of Württemberg, who became so attached to her, that on Taglioni's last appearance at the theatre she was seen to shed tears, and on being asked the cause of her grief, replied ; " If my own sister were to leave me, I should not be more unhappy."

At Munich, the future *Sylphide* was equally well received : the King, in a plain bluff manner, introduced the Queen to her with these words : " Mademoiselle, je vous présente ma femme." He then addressed his daughters, the Princesses Sophie and Marie, as follows : " Pay your respects to M<sup>lle</sup> Taglioni, and show her that you profit by the lessons in grace she gives you every evening." After her *début* in Paris, on which occasion her dancing was described as " lively, elegant, and at the same time simple and natural, animated without effort, graceful without grimace, and correct without affectation," she returned to Munich, in order to fulfil an engagement contracted by her in that city ; and at last, April 30, 1828, took possession of the throne she had conquered at the Académie Royale. In *la Bayadère*, *la Sylphide*, *la Fille du Danube*, and numerous other creations, she charmed Paris for ten years, paying occasional visits to England, Prussia, etc. At length the Emperor of Russia made her such tempting offers that she was unable to resist, and passed three years in Saint Petersburg, during which time the most sumptuous presents were lavished on her by their Imperial Majesties. But of all the enthusiastic receptions she has experienced in the course of her long and triumphant career, perhaps none has been

more grateful to the feelings of the fair *dansuse* than the welcome she once met with in Vienna, where, after having been called before the curtain twenty-two times in one evening, she was drawn to her hotel in her own carriage by forty young men of the first Austrian families. Her last appearance in Paris was in the summer of 1844, and in the following year she bade farewell (1) to the London stage, leaving as a legacy to the *habitués* the recollection of her graceful and poetic conception of the *pas de quatre*.

Among the many *dansuses*, contemporaries with Taglioni, the only one who can be said to have rivalled her in popularity is the bewitching Fanny Elssler. And yet, their claims to admiration are not the same; there is not the slightest resemblance between the ideal grace of the one, and the fascinating coquettish vivacity of the other. In Taglioni we see the sylph, in Elssler the woman. The great characteristic of Fanny's dancing is its extraordinary precision and *abandon*: her little feet perform the most rapid and intricate evolutions without the least apparent exertion. Her figure is slight and elegant, her countenance noble and expressive, and the fascinating attraction of her manner is irresistible. Fanny Elssler was born at Vienna, and made her first theatrical *début* in that city, at the age of five years. Subsequently she became a pupil of Aumer, and obtained an engagement at Naples, where she remained some time. Quitting Italy for Berlin, she charmed the Prussians by the animation of her dancing, and soon after paid a flying visit to London, where she excited general enthusiasm.

It was during one of these brief engagements that M. Véron, then manager of the French Opera, heard of her, and immediately attached her to his theatre, together with her sister Thérèse. Their *début* was a triumph: the classic grace of Thérèse and the exquisite archness of Fanny astonished and delighted the Parisians, and the subsequent appearance of the two sisters in *l'Île des Pirates* and *le Diable Boiteux* attracted crowds to the Académie Royale. Fanny Elssler's reputation has been greatly heightened by her marvellously perfect execution of the *Cachucha* and the *Cracovienne*: in these celebrated *pas* she displays a combination of grace and agility, which no other *dansuse* can

(1) Not a last farewell, she having reappeared at her Majesty's Theatre in the summer of the present year.

equal. Her salary during the latter part of her engagement in Paris amounted to no less than 80,000 francs a-year.

The best male dancer, without exception, of the present day, is Jules-Joseph Perrot, the son of the chief machinist of the Lyons theatre. He was born August 18, 1810, and as soon as he could stand upright was sent to a dancing master. When very young, he made his *début* at the *Théâtre des Célestins*, in his native city, in *le Petit Carnaval de Venise*, in which he imitated with the greatest possible exactness the attitudes, steps, and agility of Mazurier in *Polichinelle*. In 1823 he came to Paris, and was engaged as *mime* at the Gaité, where he played the Monkey in *Sapajou*, and as well as his great prototype, Mazurier, paid frequent visits to the Jardin des Plantes, in order to study the habits and gestures of the animal he personated. Leaving the Gaité for the Porte-Saint-Martin, he quitted the latter in turn for the Opera, where he first appeared in May, 1830. He afterwards accepted engagements in England, Germany, and Italy, and reappeared together with his charming pupil and wife, Carlotta Grisi, at the Renaissance, in *le Zingaro*. Since that period he has been a constant member of the Italian company in London, where he has attained a deserved reputation, not only as a dancer and pantomimist, but also as an agreeable composer of ballets.

Before resuming the thread of our history, we may be excused for devoting a few lines to the mention of two popular *danseuses*, neither of whom now belong to the company of the Académie Royale : we allude to M<sup>lle</sup> Lucile Gralm and Pauline Leroux. The first of these was born at Copenhagen, June 30, 1821, and, if we may believe one of her biographers, was so delighted at witnessing a ballet at the early age of four years, that she never rested until she obtained permission to learn dancing herself, in order that she too might some day figure on the stage. Whether this account of her unusual precocity be correct or not, we have no means of ascertaining; certain it is that she made her first appearance at the Copenhagen theatre when only seven years old, as *Cupid*, and her success may be imagined from the enthusiasm of a Danish poet, who wrote of her, that she had wounded all hearts with the arrows of love. However, she did not then continue her career : study was necessary, and the young *danseuse* was subjected for

seven years to the usual training and tortures to which the votaries of Terpsichore are doomed. At the age of fourteen, she reappeared in *la Muette de Portici* and *la Sylphide*, and very narrowly escaped imprisonment for refusing to kiss the dancer who played the part of *Donald*, on account of his ugliness; the court, however, interfered, and she was excused. She then came to Paris, and took lessons from Barrez, but was suddenly recalled to Copenhagen, to play in a ballet prepared for the *fête* of the Queen of Denmark; she afterwards returned, and appeared at the Académie Royale in *le Carnaval de Venise*; but her career at that theatre was stopped by an inflammation of the knee, which compelled her for some time to retire from the stage. In 1844, she played *Lady Henriette* at Drury Lane, and in the following spring was engaged during the entire season at the Italian Opera, where she created *Eoline*, and partly contributed to the success of the never to be forgotten *pas de quatre*. M<sup>lle</sup> Lucile Grahn is very tall and thin, with blue eyes and blonde hair: as a dancer, she has been well characterized as possessing "less strength than Elssler, less flexibility than Taglioni, but more of both than any one else."

Formerly young girls were admitted into the dancing classes at the Opera, there to be duly *tournées* and *cassées*, at the moderate charge of twelve francs a-month. On quitting the *classe d'essai*, as it was termed, they passed from one to another, until they finally arrived at *la grande classe*, from which the *maitres de perfectionnement*, paid by the management, annually selected eight pupils, whom they instructed until the day of their *début*. Thus it was that M<sup>lle</sup> Pauline Leroux commenced her career: she became a pupil of Coulon, and, after a successful essay in Paris, went to London, where she met with a very indulgent reception. On her return, she was engaged at the Opera, where Taglioni then was.

"At that time," says M<sup>lle</sup> Leroux, as quoted by her biographer, "I often danced beside M<sup>lle</sup> Taglioni, and I was very proud one evening when she said to me in a whisper, '*C'est bien!*' " Not long after Taglioni's departure, Pauline Leroux hurt her leg so seriously at one of the rehearsals of *la Fille du Danube* (which part she was to have taken), that a temporary retirement from the stage was pronounced indispensable. She went to Néris, in hopes of curing her lameness,

but returned in six months, perfectly unable to dance. It was not till three years after her accident had occurred that she appeared in a new creation, *le Diable Amoureux*, and so little did people expect to find her completely recovered, that it was jestingly said the ballet ought to have been named *le Diable Boiteux*. It was a matter of agreeable surprise that her dancing had lost none of its qualities, and that her pantomime was more expressive and more admirable than ever.

Unfortunately, the health of this charming *danseuse* became so delicate, that she was compelled finally to retire from the stage in 1845, without a benefit, though she had been always promised one, her regular salary only amounting to 15,000 francs. In her the Opera lost its best pantomimist, and one of its most graceful and pleasing dancers.

Returning to the period of M. Lubbert's management, we find in the list of the operatic company the names of Levasseur, Adolphe Nourrit, and M<sup>me</sup> Cinti-Damoreau, the last of whom we shall have occasion to refer to in our notice of the Opéra-Comique. Levasseur, who has but recently quitted the stage, is a native of Beauvais, and was born towards the close of the last century. A pupil of Garat, he appeared at the Académie Royale for the first time, October 5, 1813, in *la Caravane*, and shortly after went to pursue his musical studies in Italy. On his return, he sang with success at the Italian Opera in *Semiramide* and *Il Barbieri*; but Rossini, who was then all powerful at the Académie, enticed him thither, and entrusted him with the principal character in *Motse*. Levasseur then successively created parts in *le Comte Ory* and *le Philtre*, and attained the summit of his reputation by his magnificent performance of *Bertram* in *Robert-le-Diable*. Since then his career has been a prosperous one: of the many operas produced during his engagement, few remain in the *répertoire* in the success of which he has not had a share: *la Juive*, *les Huguenots*, *Charles VI.*, and numerous other works of more or less merit, have owed at least a portion of their *éclat* to the zeal and talent of this excellent artist. Levasseur is not only a thorough musician, as well as a bass-singer of rare perfection, but also a good actor: his loss is therefore the more severely felt, especially as no one has yet been found capable of replacing him.

At the time of his creation of *Bertram*, *Robert-le-Diable* (1) was played by Adolphe Nourrit, the only singer who has ever done it justice : the reputation of this admirable tenor began with the Opera of *Lasthénie*, the success of his *début* being but indifferent. His style was a mixture of the Italian and French schools, combining the taste of the one and the energy of the other. From the dramatic vigour of his acting, he was called the Talma of the Opera, nor was he deficient in the gay and lively qualities requisite for a *buffo* singer. On the breaking out of the revolution, in 1830, he was borne in triumph by the people among the barricades on the Boulevard des Italiens, while he sang the *Marseillaise* to encourage them. After a prolonged absence from Paris, during which he was engaged for a considerable time as leading tenor at the San Carlo at Naples, he committed suicide in the latter city, March 8, 1839, in a state of mental derangement, leaving a widow and six children. A monument has been erected to his memory in the cemetery of Montmartre, bearing the following inscription :

A. AD. NOURRIT,  
SES AMIS.

He was ably seconded during his career at the Opera by M<sup>lle</sup> Cornélie Falcon, daughter of a Paris tradesman, who, after receiving musical instruction from Pellegrini and Bordogni, and obtaining several prizes in the Conservatoire, made a successful *début* at the Académie Royale, July 20, 1832, as *Alice* in *Robert-le-Diable*, which character she repeated eleven times. Cherubini then gave her the part of *Morgiane* in his new opera of *Ali-Baba*, and she subsequently sang *Mathilde* in *Guillaume Tell*, and *Donna Anna* in *Don Juan*. For five years M<sup>lle</sup> Falcon and Nourrit shared the public favour : in 1835, she created *Rachel* in *la Juive*, and this brilliant triumph was soon followed by one no less decisive in *les Huguenots*. Her acting was then animated and expressive, and her voice strong and of great extent : the latter, however,

(1) With the production of this opera commenced the system of traffic which has since been regularly practised by the *marchands de billets*. The piece was so successful that every morning the court leading to the box office was crowded with applicants for places, and the *marchands*, by taking their station at the door early, contrived to secure most of the tickets, so that by twelve o'clock there was not a place left at the bureau. Attempts were made to put a stop to this abuse, but the *marchands* managed to elude detection by sending some of their emissaries, disguised as gentlemen's servants, for boxes and stalls, which were afterwards re-sold at a high profit.

after the departure of Nourrit for Italy, gradually gave way beneath the fatigue and exertion she had undergone, and but very faint hopes are entertained of its ultimate recovery. The last appearance of M<sup>lle</sup> Falcon at the Académie Royale took place in March, 1839, and a more painful and unavailing struggle of art against nature has seldom been witnessed. All that human energy could do was done, the most desperate efforts to bring back a remnant of the once magnificent organ were made, but in vain : the will was still there, but the powers of execution were (it is to be feared) for ever gone.

Other singers of note were Dabadie and his wife ; the former a good *basso*, and the latter an accomplished musician, with a rather sharp soprano voice ; Alizard, who has been described as having " a large body, a large face, large legs, large arms, and a powerful voice (1) " ; Dérivis the younger, who was engaged during the season of 1845-6 at the Italian Opera ; Alexis Dupont, whose sweet but delicate organ was drowned by the orchestra of the Académie Royale ; M<sup>lle</sup> Jawureck, a young and pretty German, with some taste and an excellent method ; and last, not least, M<sup>me</sup> Dorus-Gras.

This charming vocalist is daughter of a *chef d'orchestre* of the Valenciennes theatre, and her first *début* took place at Brussels. She appeared at the Académie Royale, Nov. 9, 1830, in *le Comte Ory*, and in 1833 married M. Gras, a clever violinist belonging to the Opera orchestra, of which her brother, M. Dorus, is also a member. The two finest creations of M<sup>me</sup> Dorus-Gras are indisputably *Eudoxie* in *la Juive*, and *Ginevra* in *Guido et Ginevra* : her performance of *Alice* in *Robert-le-Diable* has likewise been ranked among her most successful efforts. As far as mere mechanical power of execution goes, she has attained a degree of perfection equalled by few modern singers, but the utter absence of all animation is ill atoned for by the brilliancy of her *fiori-ture*. M<sup>me</sup> Dorus is calm, cold, and passionless ; her energy (if she have any) is mental, not muscular, nor can she *look* a tragic part. Her countenance is ever serene, and her manner ever tranquil and composed, and all her parts, serious as well as comic, are recited with an unvarying and most monotonous placidity.

(1) Alizard has lately been re-engaged by M. Léon Pillet.

Setting aside her defects as an actress, M<sup>me</sup> Dorus-Gras is an artist of real and undoubted talent, and ranks unquestionably among the first singers of the day. The higher notes of her voice are remarkable for their volume and sweetness, and though her lower tones are comparatively weak, she is so excellent a musician that the inferiority of the latter is scarcely perceptible. She is not heard to advantage in passages requiring little vocal display, because such passages generally demand a proportionably greater degree of feeling and expression on the part of the singer, neither of which qualities are possessed by M<sup>me</sup> Dorus; but where musical difficulties are to be encountered, where her extraordinary powers of vocalisation are brought into play, there she is quite at home. Even Grisi herself can hardly dwell so long on a note as the nightingale of the Académie Royale, of whom it has been jestingly said that when she once touches a high note, her audience may coolly lounge into an adjoining *café*, eat an ice, and yet be back before she has changed it. On the production of Herold's last and best opera, *le Pré aux Clercs*, the success of which was interrupted after the second representation by the illness of M<sup>me</sup> Casimir, M<sup>me</sup> Dorus obtained leave from the management to replace her at the Opéra-Comique; where, after studying the part for three or four days only, she sang it for twelve nights consecutively. Her motive in so doing was a wish to allviate the disappointment of the composer, who was then on his death-bed, and whom the temporary withdrawal of his *chef-d'œuvre* had seriously affected. This act of kindness was not without its reward, the *Pré aux Clercs* never having been before or since received with such enthusiasm as during her performance of *Isabelle*.

" M<sup>me</sup> Dorus-Gras," says the author of *les Petits Mystères de l'Opéra*, "eats nothing but veal, and has adopted this diet for more than ten years: when she plays an important character, she has a joint put on the spit, but if her part be a trifling one, she is contented with sweetbreads." The same writer relates the following anecdote. A young man, fresh from the Pyrenees, begged one of his friends on his arrival in Paris to take him to see a *femme de l'Opéra*: the friend complied, and conducted him to the residence of M<sup>me</sup> Dorus-Gras, in the rue Olivier-Saint-Georges. They had to wait a few minutes for the fair *artiste*, who was engaged with her cook discussing a most interesting point,



namely, how a certain joint of veal then in the kitchen should be dressed. On her at last entering the room where her visitors were, she began, to the utter discomfiture of the provincial, to address his friend on the subject of the late rise in the price of bread and the gloomy prospects of the harvest, adding that she herself had lately laid in a stock of potatoes and beans. The conversation continued in a like strain until the two friends took their leave, and the horror-struck provincial, concluding that the entire female portion of the Opera company resembled the matter of fact lady he had just quitted, started *en route* for the Pyrenees the same evening.

The farewell benefit of M<sup>me</sup> Dorus-Gras took place at the Académie Royale in May, 1845, when she sang for the last time in *Robert-le-Diable* and *le Rossignol*. Her salary of 48,000 francs is now divided between some half a dozen *débutantes*, mostly pupils of the Conservatoire, of no experience and little promise.

The Opera has lately lost a most useful though not very brilliant singer, in the person of M<sup>lle</sup> Sophie Méquillet, who, tired of being kept constantly in the back-ground, has preferred starring in the provinces to being shelved in the capital. She is so extremely short-sighted that when on the stage she is only guided by the voices of those who are on at the same time; behind the scenes, she is led about by her maid.

Among the many managers of the Académie Royale, perhaps the two most efficient have been M. Véron and M. Cuponchel; it was the latter who first saw Poultier at work as a cooper on the quay at Rouen, and, struck with his fine tenor voice, which the young artisan was unconsciously exercising, brought him to Paris, and, after giving him instruction, engaged him at a salary of 1,000 francs a-month, for eight months in the year. His *début* took place in *Guillaume Tell*, and was highly successful; he has, however, for some time ceased to be a member of the company. Poultier has a melodious but far from powerful voice, a remarkably clear and distinct enunciation, and his acting is simple and natural. In the present dearth of good tenors, his re-engagement would be a politic step on the part of M. Léon Pillet, who unfortunately appears to fancy that the success of his theatre depends more on the numerical strength than on the intrinsic merits of his *troupe*.

The Académie Royale is the largest theatre in Paris, and contains

1937 places. The stage is 42 feet wide by 82 deep, and is of itself equal in size to most of the other theatres, measured from the back of the stage to the centre boxes. This is clearly seen at the masked balls, on which occasions the horizontal side scenes are removed, and the stage is surrounded by a *salon*, the decorations of which correspond with those of the boxes. The *coulisses* of the Opera have been compared to a skein of thread tangled by the paws of a kitten, from the number of staircases and corridors which cross each other in all directions like a labyrinth. Previous to the revolution of July, the four *coulisses* on the right and left of the stage were guarded by sentinels of the royal guard, and six lacqueys in the livery of Charles X stood at the entrance of the different passages, while *huissiers* dressed in black were continually gliding to and fro, giving and receiving orders. Now the sentinels and lacqueys have disappeared, and only one solitary *municipal* remains to guard the whole interior of the Opera, whose business it is to see that, as soon as the curtain has finally dropped for the night, the firemen pass enormous sponges filled with water over the scenery which has been used that evening, and also that the iron curtain is duly placed in front of the stage, so that, in case of fire breaking out behind the scenes, it may be prevented from spreading over the house.

Before the Three Days of 1830, few strangers were admitted into the *coulisses* of the Opera, and even now the number is limited to a certain number of *habitues*, including the *corps diplomatique*, who are entitled by special privilege to an *entrée*, and some influential *journalistes*. Their favourite place of rendez-vous is the *foyer de la danse*, a large room adjoining the ancient Hôtel Choiseul, badly lit, and furnished with a semi-circular bench for the accommodation of the *dansesuses*: the floor is sloping, and at certain distances iron rods are fixed in the wall, upon which the fair votaries of Terpsichore rest one foot while standing on the other, in order to render their limbs pliant and supple. This they call *se dérouiller*. A marble bust of La Guimard, on a pedestal of painted wood, is the chief ornament of the room. About an hour before the commencement of the ballet, the preparatory exercises in the *foyer* begin, and in another half hour, most of the leading *dansesuses* are assembled there, employing the short time that remains previous to the rising of the curtain in practising their steps and *entrechats*. Fanny

Elssler and her sister seldom used to enter the *foyer*, having had constructed in their apartment, in Rue Laffitte, a miniature *théâtre de danse*, with sloping floor and other accessories, where they could study with equal facility and be secure from all interruption. *A propos* of Fanny Elssler, the author of *les Mystères du Grand-Opéra* relates the following anecdote. One evening, Burat de Gurgy, author of *le Diable Boiteux*, entered her *loge*, which was guarded as usual on the outside by two tall footmen, and entirely devoid of ornament within, not being even carpeted.

"My dear M. Burat," said Fanny, "I am in a terrible rage. I have my *pas* to dance, and the *corps de ballet* have stolen my chalk."

"What, you think..."

"No doubt of it. I have asked everybody for some, Nathalie Fitz-james, Noblet, and her sister, and they say they have none. It is a conspiracy, you see, to hinder me from dancing. So now, M. Burat, you will get me some chalk, will you not?"

"But, my dear lady, I don't know where to go for it."

"Make haste," replied the *dansuse*, "I will pay whatever you like for it. You have a quarter of an hour before the curtain rises. I shall expect you."

It was then eleven o'clock, and all the shops were shut : M. Burat de Gurgy was highly embarrassed what to do.

However, at last he returned, bringing twenty little bits of chalk, but looking anything rather than cheerful.

"Ah !" cried Fanny Elssler, "what do I owe you for it?"

"Ten *petits verres*," was the answer. "I have been obliged to go to ten *cafés* to steal the chalk from the billiard tables."

The fatigue and torture undergone by young *danseuses*, even at the early ages of seven and eight, is extremely severe : their little feet are first placed in a box with grooves, heel against heel, with the knees turned outwards. This is called *se tourner*. Then comes *se casser*, which consists in placing the right foot on a bar which is held with the left hand, and *vice versa*. These and manifold other different ways of drilling must be persevered in with the most regular assiduity, one week's repose being sufficient to entail on the unfortunate beginner at least two months' double labour.

Another place of *réunion* is the *foyer des rôles*, in which the artists await their summons to the stage : this apartment is seldom or never entered by the leading performers, who prefer remaining in their private dressing-grooms or *loges*, which are furnished luxuriously or simply, according to the taste or means of the occupant. The *loge* of a *danseuse* (when she has one to herself) is generally decorated in a tasteful manner ; the walls are often hung with muslin, and the sofa and arm-chairs covered with richly embroidered silk. This is the *loge* of a *premier sujet* ; those allotted to the *rats* are very different. One of them has been well described as being " a room of moderate dimensions, whose plastered walls are ornamented with caricatures of the principal female dancers, picturesquely drawn with a lump of coal. The furniture consists of one or two common deal tables and some straw chairs, and the occupants of this luxurious retreat are no less than ten in number. To these must be added two female dressers and one *coiffeur*, whose office, it may be easily imagined, is no sinecure."

A *loge des choristes* contains as many individuals as can by any possibility be crammed into it ; fifteen or twenty persons at least are generally assembled there, the plain clothes of each being suspended on pegs against the wall. Several of the male chorists are also singers in churches, or *maitres de chant* in schools ; others, during the day, are jobbing tailors or even cobblers. The Opera chorists may be divided into two classes : the first comprising those who are entirely free from ambition, and who have sung for ten years in the *ensemble* without once envying the position of a *solo* singer ; and the second consisting of the pupils of the Conservatoire, many of whom join the chorists for a time, in order to get accustomed to the stage.

Previous to the rising of the curtain, two important personages place themselves behind the first *coulisse*, one on the right of the stage, and the other on the left, each with the score of the opera in his hand. These are the two leaders of the *chant de service* ; it is their business to set the chorus right when they are going wrong, which occurs pretty frequently. The public have no idea, while they are applauding the precision of the chorusses, of the presence or use of these two invisible leaders. Another indispensable auxiliary is the prompter : even when a singer has played a part fifty times, he is prompted from be-

gaining to end as if it was the first time : he is too much engaged in thinking of the notes to mind the words, and cannot divide his memory between the poet and the composer. Nor is it by any means an easy task to prompt a singer without interrupting him in a shake or a *fioritura* : the best opera prompters are those who have themselves been singers, and are consequently acquainted with the music of most pieces in the *répertoire*.

The inferior performers and supernumeraries are paid on an average as follows. Those who figure as soldiers, nobles, etc., in processions, receive 75 *centimes* (7 1/2*d.*) a-night. The salary of the eighty chorists, male and female, is from 400 to 1,800 francs yearly, and that of each of the ninety *figurants* and *figurantes*, from 400 to 1,600 francs. Of the machinists (1), some gain from 1,000 to 1,500 francs a-year, others from 700 to 800 francs. The leader of the orchestra, M. Habeneck, receives 8,000 francs, the second leader, M. Battu, 2,500 francs, and the other musicians together 80,000 francs (2).

The *chef de claque* is a most important member of the *personnel* of the Académie Royale : the late *chef*, M. Auguste Levasseur (3), who died very recently, had a house in town and one in the country, and his income nearly equalled that of a marshal of France. He was in the habit of receiving a monthly sum as a reward for his services from almost every artist of the theatre ; those whose small salary would not admit of their paying him in money, gave him the free admissions to which they were entitled. He had two lieutenants, under whom were four sub-lieutenants. Each of these six leaders had a brigade of ten men under his own immediate command, forming a total of sixty indi-

(1) At the Hôpital Hospital, four beds are constantly reserved for the machinists of the Opera who may have been injured from falls or other accidents during the performances.

(2) The authors of a ballet (namely, the author of the *libretto*, the *chorégraphique*, who translates the words into pantomime, and the composer of the music), are paid at the rate of 120 francs for each of the first forty representations, and 50 francs for each subsequent performance.

For a short opera the authors are allowed 220 francs for each of the first forty nights, and 100 francs afterwards.

Thus, whereas forty representations of a ballet produce only 6,800 francs, to be divided between three, the same number of performances of a short opera bring in 14,800 francs, or 7,400 francs a-piece, to the author and composer.

(3) M<sup>me</sup> Hippolyte Cogniard, wife of the manager of the Vaudeville, is a daughter of M. Levasseur.

viduals. These were divided into three classes, the first comprising those who were paid for their services, the second those who officiated gratis, and the third those who paid in part their admission to the theatre. The first brigado received 1 franc 25 centimes (about 1s. 1/2d.) a-night; the second, which was generally composed of young apprentices only too glad to see the piece for nothing, owed their *entrée* to the patronage of some one of the sub-lieutenants, whom they treated in their turn to a *petit verre* or a cigar. The third class obtained admission by paying M. Auguste two francs for their ticket instead of the usual pit price, which is four francs. The signal of applause was a slight knock of the *chef's* cane on the floor, and the general rendez-vous of the whole band, where they were instructed as to the degree of enthusiasm with which any particular artist or *morceau* was to be welcomed, was a wine-shop in the Rue Favart. It is time that this intolerable nuisance should be banished from the theatres, and yet no manager dares to set the example. The public, say they, have been so long accustomed to applaud by proxy, that they have become cold and indifferent, and seldom manifest any feeling of approbation, lest they themselves should be considered in league with *la clique*. The listless apathy of the frequenters of the Italian Opera, where it requires all the passion and energy of a Grisi or a Ronconi to call forth the least spark of enthusiasm, is cited as a proof of the absolute necessity of a *clique*, and no manager, however strongly he may advocate in private the exclusion of the *chevaliers du lustre*, as they are termed (1), is willing to strike the first blow (2). "Let others begin, and I will follow," is the only answer given to the repeated remonstrances of the press and the public; and as no one does begin, the abuse remains, and is likely to remain unchecked until the Government think proper to abolish it (3).

(1) From their position in the pit immediately under the *lustre*, or chandelier.

(2) This nuisance would soon be done away with, if all *cliqueurs* resembled a certain conscientious individual, who is recorded during the performance of an indifferent piece to have clapped his hands most vigorously, at the same time shouting as loud as he could, "Trash, shocking trash." On being asked the reason of this apparent inconsistency, he replied: "My hands are paid to applaud, and they do so; but I am a conscientious man, and while I clap I cannot help saying what I think."

(3) In the smaller theatres, the *chatsouilleur* (or tickler) is almost as useful an auxiliary as the *chef de clique*: it is his business to laugh at all the jokes, especially the bad ones.

Besides the *rats* and the *figurantes*, there yet remains in the company a single specimen of the almost extinct genus of *mareheuses* (1), formerly of great service to the management in swelling out processions, etc. These are, or rather were, for their day is now gone by, tall handsome girls, whose business it was to walk in the rear of the *corps de ballet*, and look as pretty as possible. Napoleon, on his return from one of his campaigns, is said to have visited the opera one evening, and to have been so disgusted with the ugliness of the *mareheuses*, as to order the manager to get a fresh supply for the following evening, which was done.

"The *rats*," says Jacques Arago, in his *Physiologie des foyers et des coulisses*, "are remarkable for their love of lotteries; scarcely a week passes without a new one being made up, the prizes consisting of Opera glasses, pet cats and parrots, bracelets and necklaces, not to mention a stray scarf or shawl which has been worn by some fair *coryphée*, and is therefore doubly precious in the eyes of the *habitués*."

Among the prettiest *rats* and *figurantes* are MM<sup>mes</sup> Dabas, Courtois, Mathilde Marquet, Franck, Josset, and Laurent: two stage boxes on the fifth tier, commonly called *les fous*, are reserved for the special accommodation of these young ladies and their comrades, when not engaged *en scène*.

Cellarius, the celebrated professor of *la polka*, was a *figurant* at the Académie Royale. When he established a *cours de danse* in the Rue Neuve-Vivienne, he fixed the price of the tickets at five and ten francs. Those of his male pupils who paid ten francs enjoyed the privilege of waltzing with the ladies (which portion of the assembly was usually composed of *demoiselles de l'Opéra*), whereas those who took five franc tickets might indeed *talk* to the ladies, but were allowed no other partner than a chair.

The portress of the Académie Royale, M<sup>me</sup> Crosnier, is treated with the greatest deference by the *rats*, for whom she is perpetually receiving bouquets and *billets doux*. Her *loge* is a small room not many

in the different pieces, and to utter sundry exclamations of delight at short intervals, with the view of exciting a similar manifestation of satisfaction on the part of the audience.

(1) M<sup>lle</sup> Pezée, called "The last of the Mohicans."

yards square, with three openings, one looking towards the dark *passage de l'Opéra*, another conducting to the *roulisses* by a wide staircase, and a third communicating with the large court seen from the Rue Grange-Batelière : this last door is only open by day. As evening approaches, *la mère* Crosnier seats herself and scrutinizes every incomer. The chief ornament of her loge is a bust of General Foy : a variety of keys belonging to the dressing-rooms of the artists are suspended on rows of nails fastened in the wall, and near them is a frame of black wood covered with a glass, and containing a sheet of paper, on which are written the name of the piece or pieces to be performed that evening, and the exact hour of the following day's rehearsal.

Almost every singer has faith in some peculiar method of preserving or improving his voice. We learn from *les Petits Mystères* that Nasset's diet before singing used to consist of one meal of cutlets and boiled potatoes, of which he partook at noon (1); that Duprez generally prepares himself for the "*Suivez-moi!*" in *Guillaume Tell*, by a wing of a chicken and a glass of Madeira, and that Dérivis, previous to his departure for Italy, was in the habit of scorching the soles of his feet before a blazing fire for the good of his voice.

The public *foyer* of the Opera is the resort, during the *entr'actes*, of some of the most distinguished literary men in Paris, and many a lead-

(1) Etienne Massol was born in 1807, at Lodève, in the south of France. At the age of eighteen he came to Paris to seek his fortune, and on his arrival had only three francs in his pocket. Luckily, before this modest supply was exhausted, he fell in with an old acquaintance, who offered to take him to see a young *compatriote*, at that time a pupil in the Conservatoire. Massol was then, according to his own account, an *assez joli garçon*, and the Director of the Conservatoire, meeting him in the court-yard, took a fancy to him, and asked him if he had a good voice; to which he replied that every one who came from the south of France could sing. He then, to prove the truth of his assertion, treated the director to an air from *Joseph*, the result of which was his reception by the committee, who moreover gave him 450 francs in advance until a room should be disengaged for him.

A year after, November 13, 1825, he made his *début* at the Opera as a tenor in Sponlini's *Vénale*, and subsequently appeared with great success in *Fernand Cortez* and *Armide*. After singing tenor parts for ten years, he profited by the extraordinary extent of his voice to commence his career anew as a baryton, and has since that period sustained important parts in a variety of operas, including *la Reine de Chypre* and *Don Sébastien*. His voice, however, still retains its twofold quality, and not long ago he sang before the Court in one evening *Poïguée* (a very high tenor's part) and *Piero* in *la Muette de Portici* (transposed lower than usual). In the provinces many of Massol's creations are sung by a tenor and a baryton, no one individual being able to undertake them: in *la Reine de Chypre*, especially, his rôle is almost invariably performed by two different artists.

Massol's farewell benefit at the Opera took place, October 18, 1845, on which occasion he sang the part of *Achille* in *Lucie de Lammermoor* most effectively.



ing article of the *Débats* and *Constitutionnel* has been concocted there. Several of the *habitués*, indeed, who have free admissions to the theatre, make a practice almost every evening of spending an hour or so in the *foyer*, without even once inquiring what is doing on the stage (1). Among the most regular frequenters of the Opera, (we again quote "*les Petits Mystères*,") are M. Léon Halévy, younger brother of the composer of *la Juive*, M. Nestor Roqueplan, manager of the Variétés (2), and brother of M. Camille Roqueplan, the distinguished painter, M. de Saint-Georges, author of the *Gipsy* and the *Enchantress*, and M. Théophile Gautier, the clever but eccentric contributor to *la Presse*. The indefatigable Scribe is another unfailing attendant at the Académie Royale, and is said to have written in his private box there a story published in *la Presse*, under the title of *Judith, ou une Loge de l'Opéra*.

Most of the celebrated composers of the day are *habitués* either of the stalls or of the *foyer*: Meyerbeer, when in Paris, rarely misses a representation, and Hector Berlioz, the clever musician and original critic, is generally at his post, meditating on his next *feuilleton* for the *Journal des Débats* (3).

As for Auber, he is fond of listening to all operas except his own: he is said to have taken his seat in the stalls one evening, relying on the correctness of the hills of the day, which had announced *Guillaume Tell*. The performance, however, had been changed for some reason or other, and, to his mingled horror and amazement, the orchestra began the overture to *la Muette de Portici*. Away he started like a madman, never stopping till he was safely out of the theatre. Auber is fond of a quiet promenade in the *Bois de Boulogne*, where he has composed several of his prettiest airs: he has lately succeeded Cherubini as director of the *Conservatoire*.

(1) Few people, except the occupants of private boxes, remain in the *salle* during the *entr'actes*, but adjourn either to the *foyer* or to a neighbouring *café*: five minutes after the fall of the curtain the entire pit is often deserted, a quantity of different coloured handkerchiefs being tied across the benches to mark that the places of their respective proprietors are *retenues*.

(2) M. Roqueplan is said to have so great a contempt for vaudeville writers, that on his being asked by a fashionable friend why he did not write the pieces for his own theatre, he replied with another question, "Why do you not black your own boots?"

(3) Miss Smithson, the once popular actress, is now M<sup>me</sup> Berlioz.

## THE COMPANY.

## OPÉRA.

## ANCONI.

Recently arrived from Italy. He has a fine bass voice, but has as yet made no regular *début*.

## ARNOUX.

A bass singer of some promise, who first appeared at the Opera in June, 1845, as *Bertram* in *Robert-le-Diable*. He is a pupil of Emmanuel Garcia.

## BARROILHET (PAUL).

Born at Bayonne, in 1809. Although naturally endowed with a fine voice, he could not prevail on his parents to consent to his cultivating it professionally; indeed, had their wishes alone been consulted, he would in all probability have been at this moment, instead of the first baryton in France, a steady plodding tradesman in his native town. Fortunately for Barroilhét, however, chance willed it otherwise: an intimate friend of Rossini, happening to pass through Bayonne, heard him sing, and was so struck with his vocal powers and musical taste, that he entreated his parents to allow their son (then aged nineteen) to accompany him to Paris. They at length yielded, though reluctantly, and Barroilhét, full of hope and enthusiasm, was soon on his way to the capital, and was ushered immediately on his arrival into the presence of Rossini. After hearing him sing an air from *l'Inganno Felice*, the *maestro* turned to his friend, and said, "I give you my word that this young man has a brilliant career before him; write to his parents,

and tell them that he possesses a more considerable fortune than even they could desire for him."

From this moment no further obstacles were thrown in Barroilhet's way : after a year's study in the Conservatoire under Banderati, he left Paris to complete his musical education in Italy, and in 1831 made his first appearance on the stage at Milan, under the auspices of M<sup>rs</sup> Pasta and Rubini. His *début* was perfectly successful, and was followed by a continued series of triumphs at Genoa, Trieste, Verona, Bergamo, and Rome. In 1835 he sang at Palermo, and in the following year was engaged at the San Carlo, at Naples, where he remained until his return to Paris. During his stay in Italy, *Roberto Devereux* and *Belisario* were composed expressly for him by Donizetti.

His first *début* at the Académie Royale took place, December 2, 1840, in *la Favorite*, in which he created the character of *Alphonse* : the purity of his style and method and the melodious richness of his voice were fully appreciated by the Parisians, with whom both he and the opera speedily became *favorites*.

Halévy has been mainly indebted to Barroilhet for the success of two of his operas : *Lusignan in la Reine de Chypre*, and the King in *Charles VI.*, are admirable creations. In the latter piece, especially, his singing and acting are alike excellent; the very expression of his countenance, pale, haggard, and careworn, is a perfect study. He is equally good in *buffo* parts : his *Mirobolant* in *le Lazzarone*, also by Halévy, makes one forget the poverty of the music in admiration of the performer.

In the summer of 1845, Barroilhet, though suffering from ill health, accepted an engagement at the Italian Opera in London ; but he would have been wiser had he declined it : his voice, weakened by illness, was unequal to the task, for though the method and taste were still the same, the freshness and vigour of the organ were wanting. A short interval of repose, however, completely restored him, and he reappeared in the ensuing autumn at the Académie Royale, in full possession of his powers.

His annual salary is 50,000 francs, with two months' leave of absence.

## BESSIN.

A *basso* of indifferent merit, whose first appearance at this theatre took place May 20, 1846, as *Bertram* in *Robert-le-Diable*.

## BETTINI.

Another recent importation from Italy, who as yet has only sung in a concert at the Académie Royale. He has a powerful but not very sweet tenor voice, and, as far as we can judge from the single *scena* in which we have heard him, appears to have some knowledge of acting (1).

## BRÉMOND.

A bass singer, who, since the retirement of Levasseur, has gradually risen to the rank of *premier sujet*. He has not only a fine deep voice, but is also a sufficiently good actor greatly to improve the *ensemble* of every opera he appears in.

## DUFRÈNE.

The *début* of this singer, like that of his comrade Bessin, took place May 20, 1846, in *Robert le-Diable*, in which he sustained the part of *Raimbaut*. He has an indifferent tenor voice, and would be heard to far more advantage in a smaller theatre.

(1) Bettini has since (August 16, 1846) made his *début* as *Edgar*, in *Lucie de Lammermoor* with but moderate success.

## DUPREZ.

Gilbert-Louis Duprez was born in Paris, December 6, 1806. One of his biographers, after asserting that this celebrated singer purchased, when very young, a *rondo* sung in a vaudeville for half a franc, gravely adds that this *rondo* first gave him the idea of cultivating music as a profession. However this may be, it is certain that Duprez in due time entered the Conservatoire, where he made but little progress. In 1817, Choron formed his vocal institution, and selected his pupils from the classes of the Conservatoire; among those recommended to his notice was Duprez, whose musical education advanced rapidly under the tuition of so able a professor. Indeed, so confident was he in his own powers, that at nineteen years of age he ventured to appear at the Odéon, in *Robin-des-Bois*; but the attempt, as might be expected from his utter inexperience, was a complete failure.

Mortified, but not discouraged, he quitted Paris for Italy, and after nine years of unremitting study, became acquainted with Rossini, Meyerbeer, Bellini, and Donizetti, by all of whom his fine voice and promising talent were cordially appreciated. The approbation of such judges was a sufficient passport to fame, and we find Duprez shortly after creating quite a *furor* at Genoa, Milan, Venice, Florence, Rome, Naples, and in fact throughout the whole of Italy. At length, after creating *Edgar* in *la Lucia*, which was composed expressly for him and M<sup>me</sup> Persiani, he made his *début* at the Académie Royale, April 17, 1837, as *Arnold* in *Guillaume Tell*. His reception was triumphant; the purity of his voice and his masterly execution of the most difficult passages in the opera, including the famous "*Suivez-moi!*" drew down applause even from the most devoted partisans of Nourrit, then at the height of his reputation. On the departure of the latter for Italy, Duprez reigned without a rival, and commenced the series of brilliant creations which form his *répertoire*: *les Huguenots*, *la Juive*, *les Martyrs*, *la Favorite*, and more recently, *Dom Sébastien*, owe to him a great portion of their success (1).

(1) Early in 1846, he played his original character of *Edgar*, in *Lucie de Lammermoor* (in French), and literally electrified the house by the wonderful energy of his acting.

Within the last few years, the voice of this celebrated tenor has lost much of its original power and sweetness : he still sings with the energy of former days, and can still astonish the house with an occasional *ut de poitrine*, but the exertion is too painful to be often repeated. It would, indeed, be marvellous if his voice retained its pristine freshness and melody after so long and fatiguing a career. Not only has Duprez had for nine years to bear up against the overpowering loudness of M. Habeneck's orchestra, but he has also sustained a part in almost every opera produced in that interval : nay, except during the brief sojourn of Mario at the Académie Royale, he has been, until the recent *début* of Gardoni, the sole leading tenor since the departure of Nourrit. Halévy's music, in particular, is fatal to a tenor ; in order to be heard above the instrumental thunders in which that composer delights, he is compelled to strain his voice, unless he chooses to follow the wise plan adopted by more than one singer of the present day, of opening his mouth, and letting the orchestra do the rest. Such operas as *la Reine de Chypre* and *la Juive*, varied by Meyerbeer's *Robert-le-Diable*, and Donizetti's *Favorite*, would terrify even a Lablache or a Staudigl, and when we reflect that these are among the most popular stock pieces of the *répertoire*, and that *Robert-le-Diable* has already attained its 280th representation at least, we cannot wonder that their constant repetition should gradually undermine the finest voice.

Duprez is an excellent musician, and several of his pupils, among whom we may mention M<sup>rs</sup> Treillet Nathan, have done honour to his tuition. His salary is 60,000 francs, with a *congé* of two months. In 1844, he was engaged at Drury Lane for twelve nights, at £100 a-night, and on a subsequent visit to England, he created a great sensation at Liverpool and Manchester by his performance in *Guillaume Tell* and *la Favorite*.

As an actor, Duprez is deficient in grace and dignity : his figure is short and rather clumsy, and his countenance is neither handsome nor *distinguée* ; but these natural disadvantages are more than redeemed by the many sterling dramatic qualities he possesses. Energy above all is the characteristic feature of his acting : his presence on the stage has a beneficial and animating effect on the other performers, for though sometimes inclined to overact his parts, he never falls into the oppo-

site extreme. Duprez fails, and always has failed, in *Robert-le-Diable*; his voice, figure and face are equally unsuited to this character, of which Nourrit has been the only efficient representative on the French stage. In *Othello*, he has to contend as a singer with the recollection of Rubini, and the youth of Mario, but in his dramatic conception of the part he is inferior to neither. In none of his later creations, however, has he appeared to such advantage as in his original character of *Arnold* in *Guillaume Tell*; notwithstanding the decay of his vocal powers, such is the *prestige* attached to his name, that the mere announcement of this opera, though the other parts are mostly sustained by third rate singers, almost invariably ensures a crowded house.

Duprez has recently purchased a magnificent *hôtel* in the rue Turgot, formerly the property of M. Aguado.

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#### GARDONI.

The *début* of this charming tenor took place in December, 1844, on the occasion of the first performance of *Marie Stuart*, in which he created the part of *Bothwell*. Although the success of the opera was very doubtful, that of the singer was decisive; the melodious freshness of his voice amply confirmed the favourable impression already made on the public by his prepossessing exterior. His figure is slight and elegant, the expression of his countenance is extremely pleasing, and his manners are gentlemanly and graceful. As to his eyes, more than one fair lady has assured us that they are irresistibly fascinating, and as we hold all fair ladies in general, and our own fair informants in particular, to be infallible in such matters, we have no inclination to dispute the point.

Gardoni has not only a sweet and most musical voice, but he sings with exquisite taste and feeling: his only defect is a want of power, which is the more apparent owing to the size of the theatre, and the deafening accompaniments of the orchestra. Had Mario remained at the Académie Royale, he must long ere this have rendered his voice

harsh by overstraining it, or have lost it altogether. There is no medium for a tenor at the French Opera, he must either scream, in order to be heard above the music, or be totally inaudible. It is on this account that we would fain see Gardoni in his proper place at the Salle Ventadour, beside Lahlache and Grisi; neither he himself nor the public would be losers. There at least he would be spared the mortification of feeling his exertions neutralised by the incapacity of the *doublures* by whom he is constantly surrounded: take, for example, *Robert-le-Diable*, the entire cast of which now includes only one *premier sujet*, Gardoni himself, every other leading character in the opera, male as well as female, being sustained by a second or third-rate singer. This system is at once injurious to the composer, whose music, after having undergone every variety of transposition and alteration, is still further mutilated by the subordinate vocalists to whom its execution is entrusted; and to the *one* efficient *artiste*, whose efforts are as it were paralysed by the utter incompetency of those around him.

After so insufferably tedious an opera as *Marie Stuart*, the unvarying monotony of which has before now lulled even the *claqueurs* to sleep, *la Favorite*, which can, at all events, boast a dramatic and interesting plot, is a most welcome relief not only to the *habituez* of the Académie Royale, but also to the performers themselves. The part of *Fernand*, which has been alternately taken by Duprez and Gardoni, is played *well* by both, *perfectly* by neither: the former is superior as an actor, the latter as a singer. Duprez is more energetic, more impassioned than his youthful rival; Gardoni's face, figure, and voice are powerful odds in his favour. Could there be a fusion of their respective qualities, the public and M. Léon Pillet's treasury would be the gainers.

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#### MATHIEU.

An agreeable but by no means first-rate tenor, whose *debut* took place October 29, 1845, as *Othello*.

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## PAULIN (Louis).

This singer, who first appeared at the Opera in June, 1845, as *Rodrigue* in *Othello*, is said to bear a strong resemblance both in face and manner to Nourrit the elder. He is a very industrious, but far from eminent, member of the company; his voice is a thin and unpleasant tenor, alike wanting in sweetness and in power, nor does he possess any redeeming merit as an actor.

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## PORTHEAUT.

A baryton of moderate pretensions, who first appeared at this theatre in August, 1845, as *Lusignan* in *la Reine de Chypre*, during the absence of Barroilhet.

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## PRÉVOST (FERDINAND).

A most useful member of the company, who, without being ever positively good, is never positively bad. Perhaps his best part is the *Corregidor* in *la Xacarilla*.

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## SERDA (JACQUES-ÉMILE).

Is the son of a physician, and was born at Montpellier in 1804. He entered the navy when young, but quitted it in 1822 to become a pupil of the Conservatoire, where he remained for three years. His first theatrical *début* took place in 1826 at Avignon: he subsequently sang at Nîmes, Marseilles, Antwerp, Brussels, and Toulouse, and in 1835 appeared at the Opera, as *Bertram* in *Robert-le-Diable*. Since that period, he has sung in almost every piece produced at this theatre, and

has recently succeeded Levasseur in several of his favourite characters. He has a tolerably powerful bass voice, and is a careful and intelligent actor: in *le Lazzarone*, especially, his performance of the old miser is very original and amusing.

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CACCIA (M<sup>me</sup> Rossi).

M<sup>me</sup> Juana Rossi was born at Barcelona, December 17, 1808. When scarcely ten years old she came to Paris with her mother, who was then engaged at the Italian Opera, and three years later she herself commenced her vocal studies under M<sup>me</sup> Naldi and Bordogni. Soon after, she sang at a concert at the Hôtel-de-Ville, in which Rubini, Tamburini, and Grisi also took part, and the brilliant flexibility of her voice and the excellence of her method excited general admiration. Not wishing to attain the reputation of a *petite merveille*, a celebrity generally of short duration, M<sup>me</sup> Rossi remained two years among the chorus singers at the Italian Opera, where she acquired sufficient stage experience to admit of her accepting an engagement in 1836 at the Opéra-Comique, at which theatre she appeared on August 10 of the same year, as *Anna* in *la Dame Blanche*.

In 1840 she made a successful *début* at la Scala, as *Imogene* in *Il Pirata*, and during her stay in Milan married M. Caccia, a young sculptor of some talent. She then returned to the Opéra-Comique, and there created *Carlo* in *la Part du Diable*. In September, 1843, she was engaged at Lisbon, where she became very popular, and in 1845 sang for a short time at the Italian Opera in London, and subsequently at Amsterdam. Her *début* at the Académie Royale took place April 20, 1846, as *Rachel* in *la Juive*, a character hardly suited to her powers.

M<sup>me</sup> Rossi Caccia has a handsome and expressive countenance and a fine rich voice, the upper notes of which, however, are rather shrill. She acts more in the Italian than the French style, and delights in a superfluity of gesticulation, which may be very effective at Lisbon, but which is, to say the least, decidedly misplaced in Paris.

D'HALBERT (M<sup>lle</sup>).

This young lady, whose real name is Pijou, and who is a native of Toulouse, appeared for the first time at the Opera October 13, 1845, as *Mathilde* in *Guillaume Tell*. She is a very pretty blonde, and sings with great taste, but her voice, a sweet soprano, is not of sufficient power to fill so large a theatre.

DAMERON (M<sup>lle</sup>).

M<sup>lle</sup> Dameron's theatrical career has been short but prosperous, her very successful *début* having taken place as recently as June 26, 1846, in the character of *Alice* in *Robert-le-Diable*. She is not only remarkably good looking, but her voice is extremely sweet and flexible, and she acts with vivacity and perfect self-possession.

DOBRÉ (M<sup>lle</sup>).

M<sup>lle</sup> Claire Dobré, daughter of a gallant soldier who received the cross of the Legion of Honour at Wagram from Napoleon's own hand, was born at Versailles, her father dying almost immediately after her birth. Being naturally gifted with a taste for music, she entered the Conservatoire in 1836, and was admitted into Bordogni's class; she subsequently studied under Dérivis, and during her stay in the Conservatoire bore away two of the principal prizes, viz., for singing and lyric declamation. Her superiority to the other competitors for the last-mentioned prize procured her an engagement at the Opera, then under the management of M. Duponchel, and her first *début* took place December 23, 1839. She succeeded M<sup>me</sup> Damoreau and M<sup>lle</sup> Falcon in several of their most popular characters, playing by turns *Mathilde* in *Guillaume Tell*, *Isabelle* in *Robert-le-Diable*, *Eudoxie* in *la Juive*, etc.

Her voice is an agreeable soprano, and she sings with taste and expres-

sion ; her chief defect is a habit of constantly moving her eyes and head as an accompaniment to the music. Without having any pretension to beauty, her countenance is remarkably pleasing.

M<sup>lle</sup> Dobré has not been applauded at the Opera alone ; after singing at a concert given by the *Cercle des Arts*, she was presented by the members with a silver medal, in token of their admiration of her talent. Nay, more, on her gaining the prize for lyric declamation in 1839, the town council of Versailles unanimously voted her a collection of operas magnificently bound, and bearing the arms of the town on the cover ; and on the vote being approved of by the Minister of the Interior, the volume was presented to her by the Mayor of Versailles in person. Her salary is, we believe, about 12,000 francs (£ 480) a-year.

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JULIENNE (M<sup>lle</sup>).

On September 8, 1845, *la Reine de Chypre*, which had been announced for that evening's performance, was suddenly withdrawn from the bills, owing to an indisposition of M<sup>me</sup> Stoltz, and the opera selected to supply its place was *la Juive*, for the *début* of M<sup>lle</sup> Julienne. This young artist has many brilliant qualities which promise her a successful career : she has not only a fine *contr'alto* voice, but she sings most dramatically, and acts with unusual animation and energy.

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MOISSON (M<sup>lle</sup>).

Another young *contr'alto* singer, who made her *début* at the Opera June 3, 1846, by the creation of *la Pythonisse* in *le Roi David*. Her voice is very powerful but rather harsh, and her singing is on the whole far more calculated to astonish than to charm.

NAU (M<sup>lle</sup>).

The parents of M<sup>lle</sup> Dolorès Nau were planters at St. Domingo, and in 1802, in which year the negroes rose against the French, and formed their republic, were forced with most of the other inhabitants of the island to fly for their lives. They succeeded in escaping to the United States, and took up their abode at New York, in which city M<sup>lle</sup> Nau was born and passed her early youth. Being subsequently recommended to try the climate of France for the benefit of her health, she embarked for Havre, and arrived in Paris in 1832, and was shortly after admitted into the Conservatoire. There she found a kind friend and protectress in M<sup>me</sup> Damoreau, who, struck with the flexible voice and precocious talent of the young stranger, not only superintended her musical education, but in 1833, being appointed female professor of the Conservatoire, enrolled her among the number of her pupils. In the following year M<sup>lle</sup> Nau, to whom the first prize for vocalisation had already been awarded, again triumphed over all her competitors, and was unanimously accorded the grand prize for singing.

On her leaving the Conservatoire, she met with a new and powerful patron in Rossini. "*Mon enfant*," said he, "the best places at the Italian Opera are taken, there is not one left good enough for you; but I will procure you a hearing by the committee of the Académie Royale." The result of this hearing was the offer of an engagement, which she accepted and signed with M. Duponchel, in April, 1836. As is always the case at the French Opera, several months elapsed between her engagement and her *début*. This interval was employed by her in studying the three characters in which she was to appear successively, viz., *Marguerite* in *les Huguenots*, *Mathilde* in *Guillaume Tell*, and *la Comtesse* in *le Comte Ory*. The appointed day had nearly arrived when one Sunday morning M<sup>lle</sup> Flécheux, who was to have acted the part *Urbain* in *les Huguenots* the same evening, was suddenly taken ill, and her part was offered to M<sup>lle</sup> Nau. She had little time to learn and none to rehearse the character, but her unexpected *début* was not the less successful, and the favorable impression she then made on the public was amply confirmed on her subsequent appearance as *Margue-*



Ed. J. B. 1847

*Rachel*

rite in the same opera. She afterwards sang in *Robert-le-Diable*, *la Juive*, *le Philtre*, *le Dieu et la Bayadère*, etc., and has created parts in *le Lac des Fées*, *le Drapier*, *Marie Stuart*, and *l'Ame en peine*. In 1844, she sang with great success at the Princess's Theatre in London as *Lucia*, and also in *la Sirene*.

Her voice is a high soprano of peculiar sweetness and extraordinary flexibility, and in vocalization she is surpassed by M<sup>me</sup> Persiani alone. On the occasion of Nassol's retiring benefit in October, 1845, she sang *Lucia* with a perfection rarely witnessed on the French stage : her *floriture* were so brilliant, so exquisitely harmonious, as more to resemble the warbling of a bird than any effort of the human voice. Unfortunately, M<sup>lle</sup> Nau's acting is not equal to her singing : it wants life and energy. Her gestures are correct, and her manner ladylike and graceful ; but both are utterly deficient in animation. Every motion, every glance is studied ; we look in vain for that natural impulse, that dramatic inspiration, for the absence of which Art, even in its highest perfection, can never compensate. M<sup>lle</sup> Nau may charm her audience by the sweetness of her smile, and by the witching music of her voice ; but let her not rely on these attractions alone, let her study Art less and Nature more, and she will then not only charm the eye and ear, but the heart also. Above all, let her remember that, if she would touch the feelings of others, she herself must be the first to feel.

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PRÉTY (M<sup>lle</sup>).

A young and pretty singer, whose first *début* at this theatre (March 25, 1846), as *Rachel* in *la Juive*, proved that she not only possessed a charmingly musical voice, but also knew how to make the most of it. As an actress she has yet much to learn, her attitudes and gestures being terribly stiff and embarrassed.

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RABJ (M<sup>me</sup>).

First appeared at the Opera July 27, 1846, as *Valentine* in *les Hugue-*

*notes.* She has an agreeable and tolerably extensive voice, but sings without expression, and is no actress.

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ROISSY (M<sup>lle</sup> DE).

M<sup>lle</sup> Noémie de Roissy, daughter of a Paris physician, was born July 18, 1824. At the age of four years she evinced so precocious a taste for music as to induce her parents to encourage its cultivation, though they were far from suspecting that in so doing they were preparing their child for a professional career. However, a sudden reverse of fortune and the premature death of her father, who sank beneath the fatigue he underwent in attending cholera patients in 1832, compelled M<sup>lle</sup> de Roissy to seek in the exercise of her talent a means of subsistence for herself and her mother.

Having been advised by Meyerbeer to devote herself to the stage, she took lessons from Nourrit and Bordogni, and, at the age of sixteen and a half, made her first appearance in public at Bordeaux, as *Mathilde* in *Guillaume Tell*. Her success was decisive, and she shortly after sang *Lucia* with equal *éclat*.

On her return to Paris, she demanded a hearing from the manager of the Opera, and chance favoured her wishes. On May 17, 1841, M<sup>lle</sup> Heinefetter, who was to have sung that evening *Alice* in *Robert-le-Diable*, was suddenly taken ill, and M<sup>me</sup> Dorus-Gras being then in London, no substitute at so short a notice could be found. It was too late to change the piece, and a *relâche* must have been inevitable, had not M<sup>lle</sup> de Roissy offered to sing the part without a rehearsal. Her offer was accepted, and the young *débütante* was received with such favour, that the immediate result was an engagement for five years. She has since sung most of the leading characters of the *répertoire*, and we may especially instance as one of her best parts the page *Isolier* in *le Comte Ory*.

M<sup>lle</sup> de Roissy's voice is a soprano of considerable extent and power, but the shrillness of the upper notes detracts from the effect her singing would otherwise produce; she acts with great ease and self-possession, but little grace.

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STOLTZ (M<sup>me</sup> ROSINE).

We do not intend touching on M<sup>me</sup> Stoltz's private history for two reasons : first, because the numerous biographical notices which have already appeared respecting her only agree in one point, namely, in contradicting each other; and, secondly, because we have reason to believe that none of them have the slightest foundation in fact. It is, however, generally admitted that, after singing for sometime in Choron's school, she made her *début* in 1834, not as a vocalist but as an actress, at the Théâtre du Parc in Brussels, in *la Fille de Dominique* and *les Trois Chapeaux*. Imagining then that her musical talents justified her in forsaking vauville for opera, she made her second *début* at the Hague and Amsterdam in *Tancredi*, *Otello*, and *Il Barbiere*. The success she obtained encouraged her to persevere, and on her arrival at Antwerp, where the production of *Robert-le-Diable* was only delayed by the want of an *Alice*, she offered her services, and from that time played both grand and comic opera until she accompanied M. Bernard, the manager, to Brussels, where he assumed the direction of the principal theatre.

Nourrit, starring in that city, sang with her, and eventually procured her an engagement at the Académie Royale, where she first appeared in 1837, as *Rachel* in *la Juive*. Her career has since been one continued triumph; a series of splendid creations, among which we need only mention *Lénore* in *la Favorite*, *Olette* in *Charles VI.*, *la Reine de Chypre*, *Zaida* in *Dom Sébastien*, and *Marie Stuart*, have entitled her to an honourable place among the first singers of the day.

M<sup>me</sup> Stoltz, in addition to a good figure and expressive countenance, possesses a remarkable voice extending from *contr'alto* to *soprano*; to these advantages she unites a perfect knowledge of music and an exquisite taste. As a dramatic singer she is without a rival; as a tragic actress she is inferior to M<sup>lle</sup> Rachel alone. Hers is no feigned passion, no fictitious energy; every note, every gesture is spontaneous and natural. So completely does she identify herself with the character she represents, that she often overtaxes her strength, and more than once, after the curtain has fallen on the last scene in *la Favorite*, she has

fainted away, overcome by fatigue and emotion. Nothing can be more appalling than her shriek of despair, her heart-rending cry of "*perdue, ciel et terre!*" when she hears *Fernand* pronounce the fatal vow which separates him from the world and her for ever. Were *la Favorite* the feeblest composition ever produced in a theatre, that agonising shriek alone would have saved it.

M<sup>me</sup> Stoltz's versatility is wonderful; not only can she play serious and comic parts with equal ease and ability, but in dumb characters, where she has nothing to rely on but her own pantomimic powers, she is unsurpassed by any of her contemporaries. Thus her personation of *Fenella* in *la Muette de Portici*, although, we believe, she only acted the part once, has been pronounced faultless; and on the opera being recently performed in presence of the court, M<sup>me</sup> Stoltz was requested to replace M<sup>lle</sup> Marquet, for whom the character had been originally destined. She, however, refused, saying that by so doing she should interfere with the interests of others, who had a better right than herself to play *Fenella*.

The following anecdote has been related with reference to the extraordinary *truth* of M<sup>me</sup> Stoltz's acting. A deaf man was present one evening at the Opera during the performance of *Charles VI.*; being entirely deprived of hearing, he had no means of understanding the plot except by the pantomime of the actors. Taking a pencil, he endeavoured as far as he could to put on paper the different characters in the piece, and when the curtain dropped he handed his note-book to a friend, who to his astonishment read there, word for word, the part of M<sup>me</sup> Stoltz.

The salary of this celebrated *artiste* is said to amount to 60,000 francs a-year, with a *congé* of one month.

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## BALLET.

### CORALLI.

A clever dancer and very droll pantomimist. He is the son of M.

Eugène Coralli, the composer of numerous ballets, and the brother of M<sup>me</sup> Maria and Emilie Volet. He is also a landscape painter of some talent.

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#### DESPLACES (HENRI).

A young dancer of remarkable activity, but little grace. We have been assured, however, by one of the best *danseuses* in the company, that he is invaluable in a *pas de deux*, sacrificing himself entirely to his partner, and lifting her up like a feather.

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#### ÉLIE.

As we have only seen this *artiste* in the very negative part of a good genius, in which he had nothing to do beyond invoking a blessing on somebody's head, we do not feel ourselves qualified to express an opinion as to his merits; he, however, enjoys, and we believe most deservedly, the reputation of being an excellent *mime*.

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#### MAZILLIER.

This very clever pantomimist began his theatrical career at Bordeaux, and was subsequently engaged at the Porte-Saint-Martin, from whence he was transplanted to the Opera. He is joint author with M. de Leuven of the amusing ballet entitled *le Diable à Quatre*, in which he sustains the character of *Mazourki* with infinite spirit.

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#### PETIPA (LUCIEN).

If it be true, as we have often heard asserted, that the best dancers

are almost always the ugliest, it must be admitted that Petipa is an exception to the general rule. He has, however, an unlucky habit of perpetually forcing a smile and showing his teeth while he dances, thereby distorting his face into an invariable grin, the effect of which is anything but pleasing. He is remarkably active, and dances with more ease and grace than any of his comrades; and it is probably on account of these qualities that he is always selected as the partner of Carlotta Grisi.

His *début* at the Académie Royale took place June 10, 1839, as Donald in *la Sylphide*.

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#### QUÉRIAU.

We cannot otherwise describe this member of the *corps de ballet* than as a model for waiters and *maitres d'hôtel*. In the *Diable à Quatre*, we had the pleasure of seeing him hand a cup of chocolate to Carlotta Grisi with infinite grace.

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#### THÉODORE.

A recent importation from the Concerts Vivienne, where he formerly used to dance the Polka and Mazurka on alternate evenings.

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#### TOUSSAINT.

Another new addition to the company, not deficient in agility.

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#### ALINE (M<sup>lle</sup>).

Those who wait for the last scene of a fairy ballet will generally per-

ceive M<sup>lle</sup> Aline waving a wand at the back of the stage, and attired in the pink and silver tunic usually adopted by virtuous genii.

DABAS (M<sup>lle</sup>).

We say M<sup>lle</sup>, because there are two sisters of this name, called in the bills Dabas 1, and Dabas 2. The eldest, Julie Dabas, was originally a *marcheuse*, with little to do but to follow the evolutions of the *corps de ballet* and look pretty : she is now a promising *danseuse*, thanks to a successful *début* in a *pas de quatre* in *la Péri*. As for Dabas 2, we believe she is still waiting anxiously for her emancipation from the sisterhood of *rats* (1).

DUMILATRE (M<sup>lle</sup> SOPHIE).

Daughter of an ex-actor of the Théâtre-Français. She is a pupil of M. Petit, one of the professors of the Académie Royale, and first appeared at the Opera some four years ago, in *la Fille du Danube*. At that time it was the custom (a custom which has since been suffered, we think unwisely, to fall into disuse) for all dancers to select one of the most difficult *pas* in the *répertoire* for their *début*, and the one chosen by M<sup>lle</sup> Dumilâtre was the more arduous for a young beginner as having been one of the great triumphs of Taglioni. The attempt, however, was perfectly successful, and the applause she received encouraged her to devote herself with the utmost patience to the study of her art. It is, indeed, entirely owing to her own zeal and assiduity that she has attained her present high position, which is the result of a longer and more fatiguing apprenticeship than unprofessional readers can easily imagine.

M<sup>lle</sup> Sophie Dumilâtre is now one of the best and most justly popular *danseuses* of the Opera, and her name in the bills is a sure guarantee

(1) M<sup>lle</sup> Julie Dabas has recently been engaged at the *Grand Théâtre* at Marseilles.

that, whatever be the merits of the ballet, those *pas* at least which fall to her share will be well and correctly executed. She has in a great measure contributed to the success of *Lady Henriette*, *la Péri*, and indeed of most of the best choregraphic compositions of the Académie Royale; and on the occasion of Taglioni's farewell representations in Paris two years ago, amid the enthusiastic applause lavished on that matchless *artiste*, there was more than one bravo, more than one bouquet, to reward and encourage the elegant and graceful efforts of Sophie Dumilâtre.

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DUMILATRE (M<sup>lle</sup> Adèle).

Younger sister of the preceding. She was originally destined by her father to become a tragic actress, but M. Petit having remarked her *dispositions* (1) for dancing, Melpomene was abandoned for Terpsichore, and she made a most successful *début* at the Académie Royale in March, 1843, as *la Sylphide*. Since that period her principal creations in Paris have been *Lady Henriette* and *Eucharis*; she has also visited London three times, having been engaged once at the Opera and twice at Drury Lane, at which latter theatre she sustained in 1845 the principal character in the *Marble Maiden*.

M<sup>lle</sup> Adèle Dumilâtre is tall and elegant, and the expression of her countenance is so pleasing that she may be almost called pretty: she dances with peculiar lightness, grace, and agility.

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EMAROT (M<sup>lle</sup> Célestine).

M<sup>lle</sup> Emarot stands first on the list of second *danseuses*, whose names

(1) The author pleads guilty to the charge which may be made against him of introducing French words into his book. Many phrases and epithets in that language, especially those relating to the theatre, have no corresponding term in English; and he has therefore judged it better to preserve the original expressions rather than weaken the force of their meaning by any attempt at translation.

are printed in the bills in letters about a quarter of an inch smaller than those of the *premiers sujets*. She is a most pains-taking and indefatigable dancer, and merits promotion.

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FABBRI (M<sup>me</sup>).

M<sup>me</sup> Flora Fabbri-Bretin made her first appearance at the Opera about a year and a half ago, and has since danced in *le Dieu et la Bayadère* and *Robert-le-Diable*. She does not want for agility or muscular power, but her attitudes are deficient in grace.

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FITZJAMES (M<sup>lle</sup> Louise).

Elder sister of M<sup>lle</sup> Nathalie Fitzjames, who, since her retirement from the Opera, has been creating a *furor* in Italy (1). M<sup>lle</sup> Louise has been fourteen years attached to the Académie Royale, having made her *début* there (under the superintendence of Vestris, whose *last* pupil she was) October 1, 1832, in *les Pages du Duc de Vendôme*. The success of her first essay procured her an immediate engagement, and M. Gardel, the celebrated ballet composer, sent her a most flattering congratulatory letter, accompanied by his portrait. A few weeks after, M. Véron, then manager, begged her to undertake the part of the Abbess in the new scene of *Robert-le-Diable*. She hesitated, knowing that even Taglioni, after twice performing the character, had given it up on account of its difficulty; and that many of her other comrades had also resigned it. However, being much pressed by M. Véron to try, she did so, and has since played it more than 230 times. On the 200th

(1) M<sup>lle</sup> Nathalie Fitzjames was born in 1819, and is the youngest of three sisters, all dancers, M<sup>lle</sup> Louise being the eldest. At the age of three or four years, she began to act children's parts in the mythological ballets then in vogue, but her first *début* as a woman did not take place until 1837, when she appeared in a wretched ballet entitled *les Noblesseaux*, which was nevertheless successful, owing to her light and graceful dancing. M<sup>lle</sup> Nathalie, like Carlotta Grisi, has a pleasing voice, and has been known to sing in an opera and dance in a ballet on the same evening.

night of her performing the part, Meyerbeer sent her his bust in bronze, on which was inscribed, "*Meyerbeer à Louise Fitzjames, abbesse des nonnes dans Robert-le-Diable.*"

She subsequently danced in *la Sylphide*, *la Fille du Danube*, *la Gipsy*, and many other favourite ballets, and in 1836, on Taglioni's quitting the theatre, succeeded her in *la Révolte au Sérail* and *le Dieu et la Bayadère*. Jules Janin, speaking of this attempt in the *Journal des Débats* of April 18, 1836, says, "Simple, décente, assez timide pour n'être pastreblante, légère comme on n'est pas légère, M<sup>lle</sup> Fitzjames s'est tirée de cette première bataille avec tous les honneurs de la guerre. En absence de M<sup>lle</sup> Taglioni, on ne pouvait confier son casque, sa cuirasse et son épée, et ses pas, à une tête, à des épaules, à une main, à des pieds plus dignes de porter tout cela."

In 1841, M<sup>lle</sup> Fitzjames paid a short professional visit to Modena, on the occasion of the opening of the theatre lately erected in that city : she was afterwards offered a lucrative engagement at Venice, which she was forced to decline, her leave of absence from Paris having expired.

M<sup>lle</sup> Fitzjames is extremely tall, and the most remarkable features of her dancing are its great correctness and agility.

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#### FUOCO (M<sup>lle</sup>).

This very clever *dansseuse* is, we believe, a native of Milan, and first appeared at the Opera July 10, 1846, as *Betty* in the new ballet of that name. The chief peculiarity of her dancing is the astonishing steadiness and aplomb with which she walks, bounds, and pirouettes on tiptoe in the lightest and most agile manner, the sole of her foot rarely touching the ground. In pantomime she has yet much to learn, but on the whole we have seldom seen so promising a *débütante*.

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#### GRISI (M<sup>lle</sup> CARLOTTA).

This charming *artiste* was born at Visinida, in Upper Istria, in a pa-



lace built for the Emperor Francis the Second. When little more than seven years old she danced together with other children at the Scala with such infantine grace, that the Milanese, with one accord, christened her *the little Héberté* (M<sup>lle</sup> Héberté being then at the zenith of her fame). Carlotta subsequently accompanied the *impresario* Lanari to Venice, Florence, Rome, and Naples, in which last city she met Perrot, and became first his pupil, and afterwards his wife. On his recommendation Laporte engaged her for the Italian Opera in London, where she speedily became a favourite. While there, M<sup>lle</sup> Malibran endeavoured to make her turn singer, but in vain; she however so far yielded as to sing an air from *Lucia* on the occasion of Perrot's benefit. From London, master and pupil went to Vienna, and from thence to Milan, where they arrived shortly before the Emperor's coronation, and then, after a brief visit to Naples, quitted the sunny South for Paris, where Carlotta appeared for the first time February 28, 1840, at the Théâtre de la Renaissance, in *le Zingaro*, in which piece she both sang and danced. On the closing of this unlucky theatre she made a most brilliant *début* at the Opera in *la Favorite*, and from that moment her career has been one continued triumph. Her name is henceforth inseparably connected with the charming and poetic creations which her own grace and beauty have immortalized: *Giselle*, *Beatrice*, *la Péri*, have attained a celebrity equal to that of *la Sylphide* and *la Fille du Danube*, and the most devoted admirer of Taglioni can scarcely refuse a tribute of homage to the bewitching elegance of Carlotta Grisi.

Wherever she goes, her reception is the same; if she is idolized in Paris, she is adored in London. The impression produced by her performance of *la Péri* at Drury Lane, in 1843, will not be easily forgotten, and her more recent triumph in the *Pas de Quatre* is still fresh in the recollection of the *habitués* of the Opera. Nor must we omit her last creations of *Mazourka* in the *Diable à Quatre*, and *Paquita*: it is impossible to describe the fascinating *naïveté* of her manner, the arch and lively humour of her pantomime, and the extraordinary precision and grace of her dancing. How many self-styled *premiers sujets* would find their vanity lowered by the contemplation of such matchless skill and elegance! how many, conscious of their own inferiority, might feel almost with the Neapolitan that such as themselves need only

"Veder Carlotta, e poi morir;"

A clever French critic, Jacques Arago, says, speaking of Perrot and his charming wife, "People do not throw flowers to them, but hold them out from the boxes until they rise and take them."

Carlotta (M<sup>lle</sup> Carlotta would sound as ridiculous as M<sup>lle</sup> Taglioni or M<sup>lle</sup> Cerito), is a blonde beauty; her eyes are of a soft and lovely blue, her mouth is small, and her complexion is of a rare freshness and delicacy. One of her great admirers, Théophile Gautier, has compared it to a *thé rose* opening. Her figure is symmetrical, for, though slight, she has not that anatomical thinness, which is so common among the *danseuses* of the Académie Royale. Her grace is not more surprising than her *aplomb*; she never appears to exert herself, but can execute the most incredible *tours de force* with a perfect tranquillity. The *abandon* with which she hangs, one foot in air, on Petipa's shoulder in the *Péri*, is inexpressibly beautiful; it is indeed the poetry of motion. Add to this a most winning smile, and an irresistible fascination of manner, and you have a faint, very faint idea of Carlotta Grisi.

#### MARIA (M<sup>lle</sup>).

M<sup>lle</sup> Maria was born in Paris, in one of the poorest and most thickly populated quarters of the city. When scarcely ten years old she became a member of the *corps de ballet* at the Académie Royale, being enrolled among the children employed to walk in processions. She was then, in fact, what is familiarly called a *trottin*, whereas she is now one of the leading *danseuses* of the theatre. No little patience and perseverance were necessary to effect this change in her position, and M<sup>lle</sup> Maria had both. She came alone to the Opera every evening, and returned home alone also, except now and then when one of her neighbours, likewise attached to the theatre in the capacity of machinist, accompanied her. But she had often to wait for him until all the scenery had been put by, which frequently was not accomplished before two in the morning; and more than once, after she had remained shivering with cold on a bench for several hours, he went away without her, and

she was obliged to walk back alone in the middle of the night, poorly clad and half-starved.

At one of the last rehearsals of *la Tentation Maria*, dressed for the occasion *en diabolotin*, absolutely refused to mount astride a *canon infernal* drawn by demons.

"Get up, Mademoiselle," shouted Coralli, the *maitre des ballets*, in an impatient tone.

"No; I won't ride on that horrid thing."

"Ah ha! will you jump up or not?"

"Non, *na!*"

She had scarcely uttered these words, when a well-applied kick sent her upon the gun, and she never ventured to disobey again.

From demon she rose to the rank of page, and had the honour of holding up the Cardinal's train in *la Juive*, and at last was permitted to *danser* in a *pas de trois* with M<sup>lle</sup> Blangy and Albertine. After her *début* all went well with her; she appeared successively in *Nina*, *la Fille mal gardée*, and *la Tarentule*, and even attempted *la Gipsy*, but she is more at home in less serious parts. Perhaps her two best creations are *Julie* in *la Jolie Fille de Gand*, and the Countess in *le Diable à Quatre*; in the latter ballet, especially, she has surpassed all her previous efforts as a pantomimist.

In 1840, M<sup>lle</sup> Maria appeared at Vienna in *Apollon et Daphné*, and in 1843, she embarked at Havre for Hamburg. She suffered so much from sickness during the voyage, that on her arrival she missed her footing from sheer weakness on the planks which connected the boat with the shore, and fell into the water, but was luckily fished up with no other injury than a good ducking. Her success at Hamburg was immense: the worthy citizens called her before the curtain three times after every act, making nine times in all, the ballet consisting of three acts. One evening, they happened to recollect just as the curtain fell that they had only called for her *eight* times, and, to make amends for their neglect, unanimously shouted until she came. When she appeared, it was in her modest travelling dress, which from having fallen into the water had shrunk terribly and was very short. To hide this, she made a low courtesy, and the public, delighted with what they imagined to be the humility of their favourite, applauded her more vehemently than ever.

While at Hamburg, she was invited to dinner by the Minister of Commerce in company with the French minister, and was gratified by a long complimentary harangue from a certain Doctor Avenarius, attired most solemnly in black, the said harangue consisting of two hundred Germau verses, perfectly unintelligible to the fair *danseuse*.

Last year, M<sup>lle</sup> Maria accepted a short engagement at Drury Lane, and was very favourably received in *les Danaïdes* and *Giselle*, but neither of these ballets are exactly suited to her peculiar talent. Though an elegant and clever dancer, yet her *forte* is pantomime, in which branch of her art, since the retirement of M<sup>lle</sup> Pauline Leroux, she is without a rival. Her acting is graceful and natural, full of life and spirit, and her dark twinkling eyes give a most piquant expression to her pleasing and intelligent countenance; as to her feet, they are veritable importations from China. Formerly M<sup>lle</sup> Maria considered herself lucky if she gained *one franc* a-night: at present her salary amounts to 15,000 francs a-year.

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#### PLUNKETT (M<sup>lle</sup>).

M<sup>lle</sup> Marie Adeline Plunkett, who, like her charming sister M<sup>me</sup> Doche, is a native of Brussels, was engaged in 1843 at the Italian Opera in London, where her youth and beauty created a considerable sensation. In the winter of 1844, she attracted crowds to Drury Lane by her performance in *la Révolte du Sérail* and *la Péri*. Her first *début* in Paris took place March 17, 1845, and the part selected for the occasion was *la Péri*. In the summer of the same year she again visited London, and danced several times at Covent Garden, during the representations of the Brussels Operatic company.

M<sup>lle</sup> Plunkett is not only a very pretty girl, possessing one of those bright and sunny faces which it is always pleasant to contemplate, but a most promising dancer; she is *petite*, but her figure is beautifully formed, and her smile (how few *danseuses* can smile without a grimace!) is extremely winning. It is difficult to say whether she is seen to most



A. Plunkett



advantage on or off the stage, for her features, whether animated by exertion or in repose, are equally pleasing.

Had M<sup>lle</sup> Plunkett chosen any other part for her *rôle de début*, it is probable that her success would have been less undisputed, though it could hardly have been more decisive: the Parisians, true slaves of habit, could not at first conceive the possibility of any one being able to do justice to *la Péri* except the *danseuse* they were accustomed to applaud, their favourite Carlotta Grisi. Thus, the young *artiste* had to contend not only against the recollection of her predecessor, but also against the prejudices of her audience; and yet, in spite of both obstacles (and that they are no trifling ones any *habitué* of a French theatre well knows), her bold attempt was crowned with success.

Possibly her graceful execution of a Spanish dance, *la Manola*, introduced by her into the second act, and therefore a novelty, may have in part propitiated the public, or possibly the bright eyes of the fair *debutante* may have disarmed any stern critics who were proof against her talent; but though it may be doubtful whether she has to thank her pretty face or tiny feet for her favourable reception, it is certain not only that the reception *was* favourable, but that it was deservedly so (1).

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ROBERT (M<sup>lle</sup> ÉLISABETH.)

A dark-eyed and dark-haired *danseuse*, with more agility than grace.

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THÉODORE (M<sup>me</sup>).

Transplanted together with her husband from the boards of the Concerts Vivienne to those of the Opera.

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(1) Since the above was written, M<sup>lle</sup> Plunkett has more than realized the brilliant promise of her *début* by her graceful personation of Zolaï in *le Dieu et la Bayadère*.

Other *danseuses* of some merit and more promise, not included in the above list, are M<sup>lles</sup> Drouet, Dubignon, Pierson, and Wiéthoff.

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The following are among the best pieces which compose the modern *répertoire* of the Académie Royale.

#### OPÉRAS.

Guillaume Tell.  
 Le Comte Ory.  
 Moïse.  
 Robert-le-Diable.  
 Les Huguenots.  
 La Favorite.  
 La Muette de Portici.  
 Le Serment.  
 Le Dieu et la Bayadère.  
 La Reine de Chypre.  
 La Juive.

#### BALLETS.

La Jolie Fille de Gand.  
 Le Diable Amoureux.  
 Giselle.  
 La Péri.  
 La Sylphide.  
 La Fille du Danube.  
 La Tarentule.  
 Lady Henriette.  
 Le Diable à Quatre.  
 Paquita.



## CHAPTER III.

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### THEATRE FRANÇAIS,

RUE RICHELIEU.

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THE origin of the theatre in France may be said to date from the close of the 14th century, when religious mysteries were first represented by pilgrims returning from the Holy Land. Until 1398, these performances were held in the open air, but in that year several citizens subscribed towards the erection of a theatre in the Bourg de Saint-Maur, near Vincennes, and the first mystery played there was entitled the *Passion of our Saviour*. The Provost of Paris, however, by an order dated June 3, 1398, having forbidden all persons within his jurisdiction to represent either the lives of the Saints or other mysteries without the royal permission, letters patent were obtained in 1502 from Charles VI., authorizing the society of the *Confrères de la Passion* to perform in public.

The society soon after adjourned to the Hôpital de la Trinité, situated outside of the Porte-Saint-Denis, where they gave representations on festivals and holidays; the subjects of their entertainments being chiefly taken from the New Testament. Their success was so great, that in several churches the hour of vespers was altered for the accommo-

dation of those who wished to attend both ceremonies ; the clergy and the theatre were as yet too closely allied to be enemies.

In order to obviate all necessity of changing the scenery, the formation of the stage was as follows : several scaffolds were erected one above the other, the highest of which represented Paradise, and the remainder Herod's palace, Pilate's house, and the usual scenes required by the mystery. On both sides of the stage were ranged rows of benches, where the actors sat, each awaiting his turn to go on : the public never lost sight of them for a moment until they had entirely finished their parts. The infernal regions were represented by a dragon's mouth, placed where in modern French theatres stands the prompter's box : this mouth opened and shut, affording the demons free passage to and fro.

The *Confrères de la Passion* soon met with formidable rivals in the *Enfans sans Soucy*, and the *Clercs de la Basoche* : the first of these societies was composed for the most part of young men of rank, whose object was avowedly to satirize the follies of their day. The leader of this company bore the title of the Prince of Fools. He wore in public a species of hood, and was decorated with ass's ears. The performances of the *Enfans sans Soucy*, who had also obtained letters patent from the King, were held on temporary stages erected in the marketplace.

The *Clercs de la Basoche* invented moralities, in which were personified the different virtues and vices; they were, however, allowed to perform but thrice in the year, and then only on occasions of public rejoicing. Satire was their favourite weapon, and their unsparing attacks on the highest nobility in the kingdom gave such offence that, by a decree passed by parliament in 1470, their performances were prohibited. On the accession of Louis XII. this veto was removed, and full permission given to the actors to satirize whom they chose, not even excepting the King himself. Presuming on this toleration, they even went so far as to paint upon their masks the features of the individuals against whom their satire was directed, but this audacity was speedily checked by a fresh parliamentary edict.

The *Confrères de la Passion*, finding that the farces of the *Enfans sans Soucy* attracted larger audiences than their own more serious per-

performances, engaged their rivals to represent comic scenes and burlesques in conjunction with their religious mysteries (1). By this means they continued to prosper until 1539, when they were forced to quit their theatre, which was again destined to become an hospital. They then hired a portion of the Hôtel de Flaudre, but were not suffered to remain there long unmolested : in 1543, Francis the First ordered that hotel, as well as those of Arras, Etampes, and Bourgogne, to be demolished. This compulsory removal induced the *Confrères* to purchase a piece of ground forming part of the site of the Hôtel de Bourgogne, and situated in the Rue Mauconseil. Here they erected their new theatre, which same building was afterwards occupied by the Italian company until the year 1783 : the leather-market, which was built on its site in 1784, exists to this day.

As soon as their theatre was completed, the *Confrères* petitioned parliament for leave to recommence their performances, and a decree dated November 17, 1548, was passed in their favour, forbidding all other companies to give public representations either in Paris or in the immediate vicinity ; but at the same time prohibiting the *Confrères* themselves from representing in future the *Passion* or any other sacred mystery, and confining them to subjects of a less serious nature. Thus, exactly 150 years after the establishment of the first theatre, the career of the Mysteries, which had originally attained so high a degree of popularity, finally closed.

Among those performed during the interval from 1398 to 1548 may be cited the *Mystery of the Passion*, the *Mystery of the Old Testament* (containing no less than 62,000 lines), the *Mystery of St. Catherine*, the *Destruction of Troy*, by Maître Jacques Mirlet, a student of the Orleans University, the *Adoration of the Three Kings*, by Queen Marguerite of Navarre, and the *Mystery of the Nativity* (2).

(1) The performers in these mysteries were by no means confined to professional actors ; nobles, magistrates, and even priests, having at different times figured in similar entertainments. During a representation of a mystery at Metz, in 1547, a priest, named Jehan de Nacey, who was playing the part of Judas, very nearly hung himself in reality, and was obliged to be cut down with the greatest possible dispatch, in order to save his life.

(2) The subjects of the mysteries were chiefly selected from the Old and New Testaments, the lives of the Prophets and the Acts of the Apostles being by turns represented :

The moralities represented by the *Clercs de la Basoche* consisted of moral allegories, in which the different Virtues and Vices played prominent parts; the three Muses usually invoked by their authors were Faith, Hope, and Charity. The morality entitled *Bien advisé et mal advisé* comprises among other characters Free Will, Faith, Contrition, Humility, Rebellion, Folly, Vain Glory, Shame, Despair, Poverty, Prudence, Honour, and Fortune. This last personage employs a curious mode of warning *Bien advisé* of the instability of her favours, by showing him four men, whose names form the following Latin verse :

"*Regnabo, regnari, regnavi, sum sine regno.*" j

*Regnavi* and *sum sine regno* ("I have reigned," and "I am without a kingdom") have been thrown out of Fortune's wheel : *Regno* and *Regnabo* ("I reign," and "I shall reign") are the actual favourites of the Goddess, but the same lot awaits them, the wheel of Fortune being ever on the turn.

One of these allegorical dramas is represented on the splendid drapery which formerly covered the tent of Charles the Bold, Duke of Burgundy; the description of it is as follows. Dinner, Supper, and Banquet are three dangerous associates, whose temptations are to be resisted by all who would avoid falling into the hands of Apoplexy, Fever, Gout, and the like bad company. Banquet is the most perfidious of the three; he is ever seeking to invent some new torment for

as a sample of their slender literary merit, take the following dialogue between Joseph and Marie, which is nevertheless one of the best passages in the *Mystère de la Nativité*.

JOSEPH. Saave et odorante rose,  
Je sçay bien que je suis indigne  
D'épouser vierge tant bénigne,  
Non obstant que soyé descendu  
De David, bien entendu ;  
M'amye, je n'ay guères de biens.  
MARIE. Nous trouverons bien des moyens  
De vivre, mais que y mettons prioe ;  
En tizure de soye et laine  
Me cognoye.  
JOSEPH. C'est bien dit, m'amye.  
Aussi de ma charpenterie  
Je gaignerai quelque chosette.

In the same *Mystery* the shepherds, speaking of the presents they intend to offer to the infant Jesus, mention particularly,

Un beau calendrier de bois  
Pour sçavoir les jours et les mois  
Et cognistre le nouveau temps.

his guests. When he invites them to his feasts, he tempts them with dainties which they afterwards repent having tasted; at the conclusion of the repast they are terrified by the appearance of Death and diseases of every kind, represented by hideous skeletons. Dame Experience, seated on her throne, sceptre in hand, is called upon by the suffering guests to relieve them; she summons the three guilty ones, Banquet, Dinner, and Supper, to answer the charges made against them. The result of the trial is the condemnation of Banquet to be hung; as to Dinner and Supper, on the plea of their being necessities indispensable to mankind, they are spared, but only on condition that an interval of six hours shall elapse between them.

The farces, or, as they were termed, *sotties*, of the *Enfans sans Soucy* bore in some respects a great resemblance to the moralities. One of them was composed of eight characters, namely, the World, Abuse, and six *sots* or fools of different kinds. The plot is as follows: the World, weary of watching over mankind, falls asleep, and Abuse take his place. Waving his wand, he causes a troop of fools to appear before him, and proposes to them to create with their aid a new world, over which they shall have dominion. But the fools cannot agree among themselves; the reign of folly speedily brings on a chaos of anarchy and confusion, and at last the Old World, awaking from his slumber, puts the usurpers to flight, and restores order.

Among the most popular writers of *sotties* may be cited Pierre Gringoire, immortalized in *Notre-Dame de Paris*, who was at once author and actor; his *sottie* entitled *l'Homme obstiné* is a bitter satire against Pope Julius the Second.

Jean du Pont-Alais was another favourite author: he was hump-backed, and is said to have accosted a Cardinal similarly deformed as follows, at the same time placing his own hump beside that of his Eminence: "*Monsieur*, your lordship and I are in a position to prove that, in spite of the proverb, two mountains can meet."

The stage appears to have been in those days anything but a lucrative source of emolument, if we may judge from the epitaph written by Ronsard on an actor called Jacques Mernable.

"Tandis que tu vivais, Mernable,  
Tu n'avais ni maison ni table,

Et jamais, pauvre, tu n'as vu  
 Dans la maison le pot au feu.  
 Ores, la mort t'est profitable,  
 Car tu n'as plus besoin de table,  
 Ni de pot; et si, désormais,  
 Tu as maison pour tout jamais."

The parliamentary edict which prohibited all representations of sacred mysteries was a severe blow to the *Confrères de la Passion*, who had calculated on defraying the expenses consequent on the erection of their new theatre with the profits arising from their performances. They nevertheless continued to represent pieces, the subjects of which were taken from history and fiction; but the public taste had in the meantime undergone a change, and the tragedies and comedies written by Jodelle and others, in imitation of the Greek and Latin poets, especially Seneca, possessed far more attraction for the multitude than anything they could offer. They therefore resolved on letting their theatre to a company of actors, the first who had been permitted, in accordance with the monopoly granted to the *Confrères*, to perform in Paris. Four years before that time, some provincial actors had attempted to establish themselves in the college of Cluny, Rue des Mathurins, but scarcely a week elapsed ere their theatre was closed by order of Parliament.

The new occupiers of the Hôtel de Bourgogne, from the time of their establishment until 1593, were frequently obliged to suspend their performances, owing to the civil and foreign wars which preceded the reign of Henri IV.; but after that monarch's accession to the throne, they enjoyed a long interval of undisturbed prosperity.

Some provincial actors profited by the license allowed during fair-time to open a theatre in the Faubourg Saint-Germain, on the occasion of the fair held in that quarter; they were permitted to remain, in spite of the opposition and remonstrances of the comedians of the Hôtel de Bourgogne.

A far more important infringement of the privilege granted to the successors of the *Confrères* was the establishment of a second theatre, which was opened a few years later, under the name of *Théâtre du Marais*. Previously, however, to its erection, and as early as 1612, they had presented a petition to Louis XIII., praying that their annual

payment to the *Coufrères de la Passion* might cease, and demanding the dissolution of that association. Their request was not complied with until 1629, when, by a decree of council, they were recognised as sole proprietors of the Hôtel de Bourgogne.

Among the most celebrated actors of that period were Turlupin, Gros Guillaume, and Gaultier Garguille; their real names were Henri Legrand, Robert Guérin, and Hugues Guérin. They originally performed in a temporary wooden theatre erected in a tennis court; their scenery consisted solely of a few pieces of painted sail-cloth. They were their own authors, Turlupin writing the prose of the farces, and Gaultier Garguille the songs introduced in them: the *Turlupinades* (as they were called) of the one soon became as popular as the verses of the other.

Gaultier delighted in representing old men, and his singular costume excited universal laughter; his body and legs were extremely thin, and both were encased in black cloth, trimmed with red. Gros Guillaume deserved his name so well, that he was said to walk with his stomach: he tried all he could to hide his legs, rolling along like a huge barrel. Between them came the gay and lively Turlupin, perpetually skipping about and making his unsuspecting associates the butt of his tricks and practical jokes.

The attraction of their performances was so great, that their theatre was opened twice a-day, at noon for the scholars, and in the evening for the populace: the price of admission was about three halfpence.

The success of these *Turlupinades* alarmed the actors of the Hôtel de Bourgogne, and they laid their complaints before Richelieu. The Cardinal resolved on judging for himself as to the merits of the trio, and ordered them to appear before him. Their drolleries so amused him, that he directed the complainants to admit them into their company, of which they speedily became the most popular members.

Unluckily for themselves, they ventured to presume on the favour shown them by the public; Gros Guillaume, the only one of the three who wore no mask, imitated one day so exactly the look and manner of a certain magistrate, that the original was instantly recognised. But a few hours elapsed ere the offender was thrown into prison, and a warrant issued against his comrades, who, however, found means of escape.

Poor Gros Guillaume did not survive his imprisonment many days, and, strange to say, his two companions, either from sympathy or some other cause, followed him to the grave in less than a week. They were all buried in the church of Saint-Sauveur.

In 1632, a company of actors from the provinces had established themselves in a tennis court in the Rue Michel-le-Comte, but the inhabitants of the adjoining streets petitioned against their theatre as a nuisance, and it was closed by order in the following year. In 1635, another theatre was opened in the Faubourg Saint-Germain during fair-time, and in 1650 a third was erected in the same quarter, in the tennis court of the *Croix-Blanche*, which existed for three years under the name of *l'Illustre Théâtre*.

In 1658, the number of theatres in Paris was reduced to two, the Hôtel de Bourgogne and the Théâtre du Marais : both were enriched by the productions of Corneille and his contemporaries. Molière subsequently obtained the King's permission to act in the Théâtre du Petit-Bourbon, and later still at the Palais Royal. On his death, which took place February 17, 1763, four members of his company quitted the Palais Royal, and accepted engagements at the Hôtel de Bourgogne : the remainder, being forced to vacate their theatre by Lulli, who had been authorized by the King to perform his operas at the Palais Royal, applied also for an engagement at the Hôtel de Bourgogne, but were refused.

Upon this the minister Colbert, acting under the instructions of his royal master, who wished to restrict the number of theatres in the capital to two, viz., the Hôtel de Bourgogne and the Théâtre Guénégaud in the Rue Mazarine (the latter of which had been first opened as an opera house in 1671, and since Lulli's removal to the Palais Royal had remained unoccupied), selected the most celebrated actors from the Théâtre Guénégaud and the Théâtre du Marais. These formed the new company of the Théâtre Guénégaud, and the Théâtre du Marais was rased to the ground.

In 1680, the companies of the Hôtel de Bourgogne and the Théâtre Guénégaud were assembled by royal order, and the best actors selected from each ; the King's object being to unite in one theatre all the first dramatic talent of the day. The Théâtre Guénégaud was then recog-



nized as the sole national establishment, the Hôtel de Bourgogne being entirely abandoned to the Italian performers, who had hitherto played at the Théâtre Guénégaud, alternately with the regular company.

Subsequently to August 25, 1680, on which day the two theatres were united (1), performances were given nightly in the Théâtre Guénégaud : the new company consisted of twenty seven actors and actresses. In 1685 their number was increased to twenty nine, and in the same year retiring pensions were granted to several performers.

The Théâtre Guénégaud, thus remodelled, enjoyed an uninterrupted career of prosperity until June 20, 1687, when the time having arrived for opening four colleges founded by Cardinal Mazarin in the immediate vicinity of the theatre, the King, fearing the effects of such near neighbourhood, ordered the actors to quit the Hôtel Guénégaud in six months from that time. The execution of this order was, however, delayed until 1698, when, after no less than seven sites for their new theatre had been successively proposed by the comedians, and rejected owing to the remonstrances of the resident clergy (2), the former effected a purchase of a tennis court in the Rue Neuve-des-Fossés, situated in the quarter of Saint-Germain-des-Prés. There they erected their theatre, which bore the following inscription.

Hôtel des Comédiens du Roi,  
entretenus par Sa Majesté,  
MDC. LXXXVIII.

The pieces chosen for their opening performance were *Phédre* and *le Médecin malgré lui*.

(1) On this occasion appeared a royal edict, forbidding all French actors, except the newly constituted company, to perform either in the city or suburbs of Paris without the King's express permission. By virtue of this decree, the privileged comedians were authorized to incorporate themselves into a society, and a contract to that effect was drawn out in the presence of notaries. They received a yearly allowance of 1,200 livres from Louis XIV., and after doing the sum to be contributed by each actor or actress on his or her admission into the society, as well as the amount of the pensions payable to retiring performers or their heirs, they apportioned their entire capital into a certain number of shares and half shares, of which the different *sociétaires* (or members of the society) became joint proprietors.

This social contract continued in force, after having undergone some slight modifications during the Revolution, until the publication of the famous decree of Moscow, in 1812, which is to this day the charter of the theatre.

(2) The Curé of Saint Germain-l'Auxerrois among others pretended that if the site of the Hôtel de Soeurs was chosen, those in the theatre would hear the church organ, and those in the church the violins of the orchestra.

The *hôtel* in the Rue Neuve-des-Fossés was occupied by the King's comedians during eighty years, notwithstanding frequent complaints of its inadequate accommodation : its boards were graced by some of the brightest ornaments of the French stage.

In 1770, the King permitted the company to perform temporarily in the theatre of the Tuileries, until a new one, then building for them, should be completed ; they again opened with *Phèdre* and *le Médecin malgré lui*. It was not until 1782 that the theatre erected in the Faubourg Saint-Germain was ready to receive them ; and on their taking possession of it the King, by a decree passed in the same year by the state council, reserved to himself the perpetual proprietorship of the said theatre, as well of the ground on which it stood as of all the buildings connected with it. The opening pieces were *l'Inauguration du Théâtre-Français*, a new one-act comedy in verse by Imbert, and *Iphigénie en Aulide*.

Towards the close of 1789, the Théâtre-Français took the title of Théâtre de la Nation : the phrase *comédiens ordinaires du roi* was erased from the playbill of June 22, 1791. It was in the beginning of the same year that Dugazon, Talma, Grandménil, and M<sup>me</sup> Vestris, Desgarcins, and Lange separated from their comrades, and accepted engagements at the Théâtre des Variétés Amusantes, which then first took the name of Théâtre-Français de la Rue Richelieu. It was not, however, till after the destruction of the Théâtre de la Nation, or Odéon, by fire, March 17, 1799, that the theatre in the Rue Richelieu became a general point of union for all the original members of the Comédie-Française in the Faubourg Saint-Germain, and was thus consequently recognised as the sole remaining Théâtre-Français.

The decree signed by Napoleon at Moscow, October 15, 1812, which ordained that the theatre should be managed by the *sociétaires*, under the *surveillance* of a commissioner appointed by the government, continued in force until 1833, when two private individuals, Messrs. Jouslin de la Salle and Védel, were successively appointed directors. Since 1840, however, the theatre has been managed by a committee of six *sociétaires* chosen by the Minister of the Interior, and presided over by M. Buloz, the Royal commissioner.

Were we to attempt to enter into any review, however brief, of the Théâtre-Français, or to give detailed notices of the celebrated *artistes*,

ancient as well as modern, who have illustrated its history, we should require far more space than our limits will afford : for the present, therefore, we shall content ourselves with simply naming a few of the brightest ornaments of *la Comédie-Française* who have flourished from the time of Molière to the present day ; giving when possible the date of the *début* and death of each. We hope to be able hereafter to enter more fully into this very interesting subject.

NAME.	DATE OF DÉBUT.	DEATH.
Molière. . . . .	1658 . . . .	1673
M <sup>me</sup> Molière (Armande Béjart). .	1662 . . . .	1700
Baron. . . . .	1670 . . . .	1729
M <sup>me</sup> Champmeslé. . . . .	1679 . . . .	1698
Poisson (Raymond). . . . .	1680 . . . .	1690
La Thorillière. . . . .	1684 . . . .	1731
Dancourt. . . . .	1685 . . . .	1725
Poisson (Paul). . . . .	1686 . . . .	1735
Ponteuil. . . . .	1701 . . . .	1718
Dufresne. . . . .	1712 . . . .	1769
Adrienne Lecouvreur . . . . .	1717 . . . .	1730
Legrand. . . . .	1719 . . . .	1769
Poisson (Francis-Arnould) . . .	1725 . . . .	1743
M <sup>me</sup> Dangeville. . . . .	1730 . . . .	1787
M <sup>me</sup> Dumesnil. . . . .	1737 . . . .	1803
M <sup>me</sup> Clairon. . . . .	1743 . . . .	1803
Lekain. . . . .	1750 . . . .	1778
Bellecour. . . . .	1752 . . . .	1778
Préville . . . . .	1753 . . . .	1800
Brizard. . . . .	1758 . . . .	1791
Molé. . . . .	1761 . . . .	1802
M <sup>me</sup> Doligny . . . . .	1764 . . . .	1823
M <sup>me</sup> Sainval (ainée) . . . . .	1766 . . . .	183-
M <sup>me</sup> Vestris. . . . .	1769 . . . .	1804
Nonvel (1). . . . .	1772 . . . .	1811
Dugazon. . . . .	1772 . . . .	1809

(1) Father of M<sup>me</sup> Mars.

Dessessarts. . . . .	1773 . . . .	An II
M <sup>lle</sup> Raucourt. . . . .	1773 . . . .	1815
Larive. . . . .	1775 . . . .	1807
M <sup>lle</sup> Sainval (cadette) . . . .	1776 . . . .	183-
M <sup>lle</sup> Contat. . . . .	1776 . . . .	1813
Dazincourt. . . . .	1778 . . . .	1809
Fleury. . . . .	1778 . . . .	1822
Talma. . . . .	1789 . . . .	1826
Baptiste (cadet). . . . .	1793 . . . .	" "
Baptiste (ainé). . . . .	1794 . . . .	1835
M <sup>lle</sup> Mars. . . . .	1795 . . . .	Living.
Lafon. . . . .	An IX . . . .	1846
M <sup>lle</sup> Duchesnois. . . . .	An X . . . .	1835
M <sup>lle</sup> Georges. . . . .	An XI . . . .	Living.
Firmin. . . . .	1811 . . . .	Living.
Monrose (1) . . . . .	1815 . . . .	1842
Menjaud. . . . .	1819 . . . .	Living.
Périer. . . . .	1825 . . . .	Living.
Joanny. . . . .	1826 . . . .	Living.
M <sup>lle</sup> Plessy (2). . . . .	1834 . . . .	Living.

(1) M. Louis Monrose, son of this celebrated actor, has been recently engaged at the Théâtre-Français.

(2) We have added to the foregoing list the name of M<sup>lle</sup> Plessy, as since July 12, 1846, she has ceased to be a member of the company. We subjoin a short sketch of her dramatic career.

M<sup>lle</sup> Jeane-Sylvie Plessy is the daughter of a worthy citizen of Metz, whom a reverse of fortune compelled to turn actor. In 1820, being then ten years old, she became a pupil of the Conservatoire, contrary to the general rule, according to which no one under fifteen years of age can be admitted a member. Five years afterwards, March 10, 1834, she made her first *début* at the Théâtre-Français, where her youth and beauty spoke volumes in her favour. By dint of study she gradually rose from the humble position of a *débütante* to that of *premier sujet*, and, up to the time of her secession from the company, was generally considered as the best actress of *la haute comédie* since the days of M<sup>lle</sup> Mars.

M<sup>lle</sup> Plessy owes much of her popularity to the fascinating expression of her eye, the sweetness of her smile, and the bell-like tone of her voice, which is singularly clear and musical; her carriage and deportment, moreover, bespeak the *femme du monde*, and there is a winning elegance in her manner rarely met with at the Théâtre-Français. Her acting is studied and graceful, but somewhat monotonous, nor does she possess that peculiar flexibility of voice and feature which rendered M<sup>lle</sup> Mars so admirable in comedy as she was in drama, as perfect a representative of the *Buchesse de Guise* as she was of *Célimène*.

M<sup>lle</sup> Plessy, since her marriage with M. Arnould, favourably known as a dramatic author, has been acting at Saint Petersburg with considerable success.

## THE COMPANY.

### BEAUVALLÉT.

One fine morning in April, 1821, some eight or nine youths were assembled on the hill of Montmartre. Beauvallet, who had just arrived in Paris, at the age of nineteen, from Pithiviers, his native place, with the intention of studying painting, had given some of his fellow-students a *rendez-vous*, which was to terminate in their breakfasting together. Among them was a young poet, engaged on a tragedy, the subject of which was the *Sicilian Vespers*. While Beauvallet sat taking sketches, the author began to declaim in a pathetic and whining tone the verses he had just written. Suddenly, a deep bass voice interrupted him; it was that of the would-be painter, reciting a passage from La Harpe's *Barnécides*. On he went louder and louder, to the surprise of his comrades, one of whom, previously lulled to sleep by the sentimental tone of the poet, woke in a fright, thinking a thunderbolt had fallen on the old church of Montmartre. When Beauvallet at last paused to take breath, the whole assembly burst into a shout of applause, and, without even asking his opinion, decided that he should be an actor. With all the carelessness of a youth of nineteen, he replied: "Let us go and breakfast; to-morrow we will see about it." And he *did* see about it, for shortly after, when the others had in all probability quite forgotten the circumstance, he presented himself at the Conservatoire, and demanded a hearing. He was received by four professors, and commenced reciting the same passage from the *Barnécides*, possibly because he knew no other. At the third line, two of the professors looked at one another, wondering where such a voice came from, and never imagining that the thin and delicate-looking creature before them could have anything to do with it. Nothing daunted, Beauvallet went on bravely, until the two professors, more persuaded than ever that there was some trickery in the case, left the room. However, a third luckily remained who had sense enough to perceive that the voice was

perfectly natural, and, thanks to his support, Beauvallet was admitted into a class. In 1825, he made his *début* at the Odéon as *Tancrède* (1), and soon became a great favourite with the students of the *Quartier Latin*. On the first representation of *Roméo et Juliette*, by Frédéric Soulié, Beauvallet alone saved the piece from summary condemnation. At the end of the fourth act, the *parterre* began first to murmur, and eventually to hiss; but on the curtain rising for the fifth act, the audience became gradually interested by the powerful acting of Beauvallet, and at last overwhelmed him with applause.

The Odéon closed in 1828, and, without waiting for it to re-open, he accepted an engagement at the Ambigu, where he remained three years, some of his most successful creations being in *Nostradamus*, *l'Enragé*, and *Coin*.

In 1830, he appeared at the Français as Hamlet, and in the following year was made *sociétaire* (2). Since then his creations have been numerous, among the most brilliant being *Yacoub* in *Charles VII.*, *Didier* in *Marion Delorme*, *Israël* in *Marino Faliero*, and *Ivan* in *Catherine II.*

Beauvallet is short in stature, and his countenance, though expressive, is far from handsome; but there is a frank and simple dignity in his manner and bearing which is seldom met with on the stage. We would particularly mention his *Horace* in *les Horaces* as one of his best efforts: the haughty sternness of the warrior who sacrifices without regret every tie of love and friendship to the call of patriotism is admirably portrayed by him. His voice is deep and sonorous, but its tone, when over-exerted, becomes harsh and grating to the ear: this defect is especially observable in his pronunciation of the letter *r*, on which he is too fond of dwelling, saying for *frappez*, *frrrapppez*, etc.

(1) He had previously become a great favourite with the *habitués* of the Montmartre, Belleville, and Mont-Parnasse theatres, often playing at all three on one and the same evening.

(2) There are at present seventeen *sociétaires*, viz:

M <sup>rs</sup> <sup>es</sup> Samson.	M <sup>rs</sup> Mante.
Léger.	Desmoussieux.
Beauvallet.	Anals Aubert.
Geffroy.	Noblet.
Regnier.	Rachet.
Provost.	Rehan.
Guyon.	Mélinier.
Brindran.	Jenain.
Leroux.	

Beauvallet is remarkably attentive to costume, and in his personation of historical characters adopts the dress of the times in which they lived with the most scrupulous minuteness. In addition to his sterling qualities as an actor, he is also a clever painter, as well as being author of a tragedy called *la Prédiction*, played at the Odéon.

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BRINDEAU.

After quitting the Vaudeville for the Variétés, Brindeau was engaged to replace Menjaud at the Français in 1841 or 1842, and was shortly after made *sociétaire*. His creations since that period have been numerous, among the best being *Bolingbroke* in *le Verre d'Eau*, and *César* in *le Mari à la Campagne*. Though far inferior to his predecessor, Menjaud, in courtly elegance of manner, he is a very gentlemanly and intelligent actor, and one whom in the present dearth of dramatic talent it would be extremely difficult to replace.

Perhaps we ought to add, for the benefit of our fair readers, that M. Brindeau's toilette is generally considered to be irreproachable.

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DUPUIS (ADOLPHE).

This young and promising actor made his *début* at the Théâtre-Français in the summer of 1845, in *les Femmes Savantes* and *le Jeune Mari*, and has since been engaged as *pensionnaire*. His personal appearance is very much in his favour : he has fine eyes, an intelligent and prepossessing countenance, a good figure, and gentlemanly manners. His voice is clear and agreeable, and he recites well : he is moreover almost wholly free from the awkwardness usually evinced by *débutants*. His gestures are correct and graceful, and he only requires a little more confidence in his own powers, and a little more animation, to become an accomplished actor.

## FECHTER.

Another young aspirant for dramatic honours, whose first appearance at the Français took place in May, 1845, in Bayard's comedy of *Un Ménage Parisien*. We have seen him play *Curiace* in *les Horaces* with considerable animation and energy : unfortunately, his inexperience of the stage betrays itself in almost every one of his attitudes and gestures, which are often strangely inappropriate, and always deficient in grace. He has, however, a pleasing voice, and a slight and not inelegant figure.

## FÉLIX (RAPHAËL).

A young tragic actor of high promise, whose *début* at the Théâtre-Français took place May 8, 1846, as *Curiace* in *les Horaces*. Two or three months later he accompanied his sister, M<sup>lle</sup> Rachel, to England, and played with success at the St. James's Theatre.

## FONTA.

The parts confided to this actor are seldom important, and occasionally consist of merely ten or twenty lines. We believe him, however, to be capable of better things.

## GEFFROY.

A most careful and pains-taking actor, who, in spite of an unprepossessing exterior and a harsh unpleasant voice, has attained a reputation which his sterling dramatic qualities fully merit, and which is the more honourable, inasmuch as it has been wholly earned by long study



and untiring perseverance. Without being either a Talma or a Fleury, Geffroy possesses talents which are seen to advantage both in tragedy and in comedy; his acting is animated, yet free from rant, his utterance is clear and distinct, and his gestures are correct and natural. He is one of the few performers on whom an author may safely rely; whether his part be important or trifling, he is equally sure to do his best, and to neglect no exertion in his power to ensure the success of the piece in which he plays. His *Appius* in *Virginie*, and *Félicie* in *Un Homme de Bien*, are clever personations, especially the latter, which is admirably adapted to his peculiar powers.

Geffroy is also a painter of some talent, and has received a gold medal for his excellent picture of the *Foyer de la Comédie-Française* (1). He is related by marriage to one of the retired celebrities of the Théâtre-Français, M<sup>me</sup> Geffroy being a daughter of M<sup>lle</sup> Rose Dupuis.

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GOT.

A young comic actor, as yet ill at ease on the stage, but not deficient in original humour.

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GUYON.

Georges Guyon, grandson of Naudet, formerly *sociétaire* of the Théâtre-Français, was born October 11, 1809, in a village near Chablis. At the age of twelve he came to Paris, and studied there for six years, at the expiration of which he passed a year in a lawyer's office, and in 1829, unable any longer to resist his love of the stage, obtained admittance into the Conservatoire, thanks to the recommendation of Cargny. In two years from that time he was offered by Bocage the part

(1) This picture, which contains portraits of the principal *artistes* of the Comédie-Française, in addition to most admirable likenesses of Monrose, Menjaud, Firmin, M<sup>lle</sup> Mars, etc., hangs in the private *foyer* of the theatre.

of *Paolo* in Alexandre Dumas's *Térèse*, then about to be produced at the *Nouveautés*. Guyon was enchanted at this unexpected piece of good fortune; but after a few rehearsals his conception of the part proved so unsatisfactory to the author, that he determined to withdraw it from him. How to do so was the difficulty, for he had no wish to wound the feelings of the young actor : chance, however, favoured his design, for the *Théâtre des Nouveautés* suddenly closed, and the piece was transferred to the Opéra-Comique. Dumas immediately added a *barcarolle* to Paolo's part, which, Guyon being unable to sing, was forthwith given to Féréol.

After waiting eighteen months, Guyon made his *début* March 3, 1833, at the Français, as *Mahomet*, and a few days later played the *Duc de Guise* in *Henri III.*, M<sup>lle</sup> Mars being the Duchess. He was called for at the end of the piece and much applauded, but was not engaged, there being no vacancy at the time. In the same year he played *Duc Alphonse* to M<sup>lle</sup> George's *Lucrèce Borgia*, at the Porte-Saint-Martin, and acquitted himself to the satisfaction of author, manager, and public; he was not, however, permanently engaged at any theatre until the following year, when he appeared at the Ambigu, April 26, as *Caravage* in the new piece of that name. The authors, little pleased with his style of rehearsing their drama, expected a complete failure; but the public, delighted with his fine manly figure and the energy of his acting, received him with such shouts of applause, that the overjoyed dramatists, after the curtain had fallen, with one accord pronounced him to be a Talma. From that evening he became a standard favourite on the Boulevard, and his brilliant creations of *Glenarvon* and *Gaspardo le Pêcheur* placed him in the first rank of melodramatic performers.

In 1838, he left the Ambigu and played for a short time at the Français, which he soon quitted, owing to the rejection of his demand to be made a *sociétaire*, for the Renaissance, where he created *le Proscrit*, *le Fils de la Folle*, and lastly *le Cid* in *la Fille du Cid*, by Casimir Delavigne. His effective acting in this piece, ably seconded by that of his cousin Emilie, obtained them both admission to the Français; Guyon being received as *sociétaire*, and *la Fille du Cid*, now M<sup>me</sup> Guyon, as *pensionnaire*.

Since then, he has played *Bajazet*, *Mithridate*, and other personages of the ancient *répertoire*. Of his modern creations, the best, indisputably, is *Orloff* in *Catherine II*. He is, however, essentially an actor of drama, not of tragedy, nor do we think him in his proper place at the Français; his energy is purely melodramatic, and his gestures are rarely classical. His voice, which is deep and powerful, but rather husky, seems better adapted to the *tirades* of a *Caravage* or a *Gaspardo* than to the more refined language of Racine and Corneille, and we never see him in such uncongenial characters as *le vieil Horace* or *Bajazet*, without heartily wishing him again at the Ambigu.

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JOANNIS.

An efficient representative of middle-aged uncles, guardians, virtuous domestics, and other equally useful but equally unimportant characters.

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LEROUX (PAUL).

Born at Saint-Quentin, June 30, 1819. He received the first rudiments of education in his native town, and afterwards continued his studies under the direction of a priest, now *curé* at the cathedral of Meaux. It was the wish of his parents that he himself should take orders; but Leroux, who had acquired a taste for the stage from a perusal of the best dramatic authors, had already made up his mind to become an actor. But how to carry his plan into effect was the difficulty. In order to act, he must go to Paris, and knowing his father's intentions with respect to his future career, he dared not tell him *why* he wished to go thither. At length, on the plea of studying for the medical profession, he was allowed to leave home, and, once at Paris, he resolved to follow his own fancy. His family, finding all remonstrances and entreaties equally vain, no longer attempted to dissuade him, and in June,

1838, he obtained admittance into the Conservatoire. There he gained a prize in 1840, and in May, 1841, made his first appearance at the Théâtre-Français. It is, however, but recently that Leroux has had an opportunity of distinguishing himself, the first important creation entrusted to him having been that of *Duvernoy* in *le Gendre d'un Millionnaire*, a comedy which, though supported by the admirable acting of Samson, Regnier and M<sup>me</sup> Volnys, met with a very indifferent reception from the public. After this, as far as he himself was concerned, highly creditable essay, Leroux replaced at a short notice Maillart in *la Femme de Quarante Ans*, and Brindeau in *le Mari à la Campagne*, and subsequently created *Octave* in *Un Homme de Bien*.

In the autumn of 1845, immediately after the departure of M<sup>lle</sup> Plessy, he, together with M<sup>lle</sup> Denain, demanded to be received as members of the Society; but they were not admitted as such until April 1, in the present year.

Leroux is a fine-looking young man, with a good figure and gentlemanly manners; his voice is remarkably clear, and he acts quietly and without exaggeration. As yet, he is more indebted to his natural qualities than to study for the success he has obtained; as yet he has acted much and studied (to all appearance) little: it now remains for him to reverse the order of things, to act *less* and study *more*.

#### LIGIER.

Born at Bordeaux, December 11, 1797. His predilection for the stage is said to have originated in the following circumstance. One evening, while listening to a tragedy of Corneille performed by some amateurs in a private theatre, he beheld in an adjoining box a pair of marvellously fine eyes, whose beauty was heightened by their being filled with tears! Urged by some irresistible impulse, he repeated his visit to the same theatre on the following evening, and there, weeping over the sorrows of another of Corneille's heroines, were the eyes, still lovelier than before. Ligier was then young, and, we may take it for granted, susceptible, for he imagined that were *he* able to draw tears

from such eyes, he should be the happiest of men. With this aim in view he began to study tragedy, and had in his turn the satisfaction of seeing the bright eyes weep for him.

His determination to become an actor was confirmed by the approbation of Talma, from whom, during a professional visit of the latter to Bordeaux, Ligier received much valuable counsel and encouragement. It was indeed under the auspices of the great tragedian that he quitted his native city for Paris, and made a brilliant *début* at the Théâtre-Français in December, 1819, as *Britannicus* in *Néron*. He remained there for three years, appearing by turns and with equal success in the ancient and modern *répertoire*, and creating original parts in *Sylla*, *Marie Stuart*, and other tragedies of more or less merit. On the expiration of his engagement, after paying a short visit to the provinces, he played for some time at the *Odéon*, and greatly increased his reputation by his creations in *Jeanne d'Arc* and *la Maréchale d'Ancre*. From thence he went to the Porte-Saint-Martin, where his performance of *Morino Faliéro* in Casimir Delavigne's tragedy of that name obtained his re-admission to the Théâtre-Français on the death of Talma, with the title of *sociétaire*. Since his return thither he has gained new laurels by his creations of *Louis XI.* (1) and *Richard* in *les Enfants d'Edouard*, both of which characters are personated by him with consummate talent. He has also been deservedly applauded in *Hernani*, *le Tisserand de Ségorie*, a miserable piece which his acting alone saved from summary condemnation, and *Virginie*.

It must be confessed that Ligier is but little indebted to his personal appearance for his reputation as a tragedian; his figure is short and insignificant, and his countenance, though by no means destitute of expression, is far from imposing. He has, however, a fine manly voice, which needs no straining to be effective, and which, notwithstanding, he is now and then disposed to exert more than is necessary.

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(1) Shortly after Ligier's first performance of this character, some flattering lines were addressed to him, which terminated thus.

"En le voyant, la France consolée  
Croit voir son grand Talma sortir du mausolée."

## MAILLART.

After completing an engagement as *pensionnaire* at the Français, Maillart quitted that theatre for the Variétés, but was tempted to return to his original position, in the hope of being eventually admitted among the *sociétaires*. This hope has not yet been realized, but we have little doubt that the intelligence and talent evinced by Maillart in most of his personations will ere long be considered a sufficient passport to promotion. He has, however, some slight defects which might easily be removed, or, to say the least, lessened, with a little care and attention, such as an occasional slovenliness in his gestures and carriage, and a habit of constantly speaking in so subdued a tone as to be at times almost inaudible.

His *De Silly*, in *la Femme de Quarante Ans*, setting aside the imperfections already alluded to, is a clever piece of acting, and many of his other creations display considerable originality of conception, and versatility of talent.

## MAINVIELLE.

A serviceable actor, who plays the steady matter of fact characters, which require a good memory but little talent, such as *Céante* in *Tartufe*, and *Ariste* in *les Femmes Savantes*.

## MAUBANT.

Useful in tragedy and in comedy; endowed by Nature with a tall figure and a clear voice.

## MICHEAU.

Short in stature, with a comic face and very droll staring eyes.

## MIRECOUR.

A quiet gentlemanly actor, who has also the reputation of being a clever landscape-painter. Of his pictorial abilities we know nothing : in his dramatic capacity he has two slight defects, viz., a want of animation and a disagreeable voice.

## PROVOST.

The celebrated actor Larive encouraged Provost, when quite a young man, to solicit a hearing from the committee of the Conservatoire, in some of the leading tragic characters : he failed, however, in interesting his judges, who unanimously agreed that his shoulders were much too narrow, and his voice much too effeminate for tragedy. Nothing daunted, he again braved the ordeal a few months later, by which time he had acquired a more correct idea of his own powers, and succeeded in obtaining admission to study third-rate parts. In another year he gained a prize, and was subsequently engaged by Picard, under whose management the Odéon opened in 1819. In 1821 he became *sociétaire* of the Odéon, and on the closing of that theatre accepted an engagement at the Porte-Saint-Martin, where he played by turns every kind of melodramatic character, virtuous as well as vicious, two of his principal creations being *Sainte-Croix* in *la Chambre Ardente*, and *Gubetta* in *Lucrèce Borgia*. In March, 1835, he made his *début* at the Français, and four years later was made *sociétaire* : he is also one of the professors of the Conservatoire.

Provost is a careful rather than a brilliant actor ; he seldom excites enthusiasm, but is always seen with pleasure. His humour is dry, but

perfectly natural, and entirely free from exaggeration ; his gestures are easy and correct, and his voice is remarkably clear and sonorous. He is excellent as *Arnolphe* in *l'Ecole des Femmes*, and one of his best modern creations is the hypocritical *Mathieu* in *le Mari à la Campagne*. Nor must we forget his recent triumph in Samson's agreeable comedy, *la Famille Poisson* ; his performance of *Raymond* is an admirable piece of acting, worthy of Bouffé.

#### REGNIER.

François-Joseph Regnier, son of M<sup>me</sup> Tousez, ex-*sociétaire* of the Théâtre-Français, was born at Paris, April 1, 1807. After leaving college, he studied successively painting and architecture, which last profession he intended to follow. At the age of nineteen he was a pupil of the Académie des Beaux-Arts, and appeared for his examination with fear and trembling, being aware that, though tolerably well grounded in other respects, he knew little or nothing of geometry, an intimate acquaintance with which branch of science was expected from every candidate. Chance, however, favoured him, and he passed his first examination without difficulty ; this encouraged him to present himself with perfect confidence a second time, when, to his surprise and dismay, he was taken aback by one or two unexpected and most puzzling questions, and rejected. What was he to do ? His own wish pointed to the stage, but his mother, whom he consulted as to his future projects, endeavoured to dissuade him from embracing the theatrical profession. All her attempts to turn him from his purpose were, however, of no avail ; he was full of confidence in his own abilities, partly from being familiarly acquainted with the works of the principal dramatists, and partly from having been in the habit of acting *en amateur* with a party of young friends, embryo architects like himself. In short, he carried his point, and made a modest *début* (1) at the Montmartre thea-

(1) Strictly speaking, this was not his first appearance in public, he having played when only two years old the part of the King of Rome, in *Paris, Rome et Vienne*, a *pièce de circonstance* produced at the Théâtre de l'Impératrice (the Odéon).



tre, where he played some eight or nine secondary characters, patiently waiting for an opportunity of distinguishing himself. He had not long to wait; for a performance being got up at Versailles, in which M<sup>lle</sup> Duchesnois was to play *Phèdre*, and the company of the Théâtre-Français *les Jeux de l'Amour et du Hasard*, it was discovered that the latter piece could not be represented for want of a *Pasquin*. Regnier offered his services, which were gladly accepted, and so well did he acquit himself of his task, that the manager of the Metz theatre, who was present on the occasion, instantly engaged him. In the following year (1827) he went to Nantes, where he remained three years. During his stay in that city, Gontier, the celebrated actor of the Gymnase, came to perform for a few nights at the theatre, and at one of the rehearsals treated the company in general, and Regnier in particular, in a rather overbearing manner. This the latter, who had not forgotten his triumph at Versailles, when surrounded by the *élite* of the Théâtre-Français, and who was therefore the less inclined to submit to be dictated to by a mere vaudeville actor, resented, and kept up his own consequence so well, that at the conclusion of the piece Gontier (whose apparent rudeness had been wholly unintentional) complimented him on his spirit. There the matter ended, but Gontier did not so easily forget the rising young comedian: on the opening of the Palais Royal shortly after, Regnier was invited to Paris by M. Dormeuil, with whom he signed a three years' engagement, not knowing at the time that the kind friend who had recommended him to the notice of the manager was his old acquaintance of the Gymnase. He had, however, scarcely been four months at the Palais Royal, when he asked M. Dormeuil to cancel his engagement. His motive for so doing was simply this: the Théâtre-Français had recently lost both Cartigny and Samson, the one having retired, and the other having transferred his talents to the Palais Royal. Monrose was thus left alone to sustain the whole weight of the comic *répertoire*, and the *sociétaires* were anxiously searching for some one to share it with him. Some of them still recollected the *Pasquin* of Versailles, and offered him very advantageous terms, which M. Dormeuil, not wishing to injure the young actor's future interests, left him at liberty to accept.

Regnier first appeared at the Français November 6, 1831, as *Figaro*

in *le Mariage de Figaro*; he afterwards played *Riffard* in *la Petite Ville*, and *Figaro* in *le Barbier de Séville* with considerable success. He had one great advantage over most *débuteurs* in having well studied each part beforehand, instead of being obliged to learn it as he wanted to play it.

His first important original character was *Jean* in Scribe's comedy of *Bertrand et Raton*, his excellent personation of which caused him to be promoted to the rank of *sociétaire* in 1834. Since that time he has created, among many other parts, *Oscar* in *le Mari qui trompe sa Femme*, *Balandard* in *Une Chaine*, *Dubouloy* in *les Demoiselles de Saint-Cyr*, the *Cardinal Dubois* in *la Fille du Régent*, and *Colombet* in *le Mari à la Campagne*. This last-named comedy, which has been performed more than a hundred nights at the Français, owes most of its success to his admirable acting. The other characters are cleverly drawn, but he is the centre of attraction: it is his inexhaustible unflagging gaiety, his extraordinary animal spirits alone, which carry away his audience in spite of themselves, and cause them to laugh and shout, clap their hands, and cheer until the house rings again.

Regnier is, in the strictest sense of the word, a true comedian, never descending to vulgarity, nor losing for an instant the gentlemanly manner which distinguishes the actor from the mere buffoon. His countenance is both intellectual and prepossessing, and his voice is unusually clear and agreeable.

In the spring of 1845, he performed for some time at the St. James's Theatre with M<sup>lle</sup> Plessy, his most popular character in London, as in Paris, being *le Mari à la Campagne*.

Regnier is not only an excellent actor, but a clever and well-informed man; he was the first who proposed erecting a monument to Molière, and it was mainly owing to his zeal and activity that the subscription for the fountain lately placed in the Rue Richelieu, opposite the poet's house, was opened. In his public capacity, his popularity is equal to his merits; and in his own domestic circle, his unaffected kindness and amiable manners have secured him the esteem and respect of all who are acquainted with him.

## RICHE.

If a comic face can make a comic actor, Riché has every claim to the title; his reputation, however, cannot be said to depend on his looks alone. He has a good voice, a lively and unembarrassed manner, and can make the most of a bad part, a feat in reality more difficult than it appears to be. He has succeeded Regnier as *Oscar Rigaud* in *la Camaraderie*, which is a more important character than usually falls to his share, and is played by him with much humour and originality.

## SAMSON.

Born at Saint-Denis, July 2, 1793. He was originally clerk to an attorney at Corbeil, and was subsequently employed in a Paris lottery office. In the early part of his dramatic career, he played at Dijon and Besançon, and afterwards at Rouen, where Picard, then manager of the Odéon, saw him and engaged him for six years. In 1826 he went to the Français, but quitted it in 1830 for the Palais Royal: a judgment, however, of the *Tribunal de Première Instance* obliged him again to return to the Français, where he is now the senior *sociétaire*. He is also one of the professors of the Conservatoire, and among those who have profited by his instructions are M<sup>lles</sup> Rachel and Plessy. He has been Vice-President of the Dramatic Artists' Association ever since its first foundation, and no member of that admirably organized society has laboured with greater zeal and earnestness in its behalf.

His comedies of *la Belle-Mère et le Gendre*, *Un Veuveage*, and *la Famille Poisson*, all of which are favourite pieces in the *répertoire* of the Théâtre-Français, entitle him to an honourable reputation among the dramatists of the present day.

Samson is one of the few really sterling comedians that remain to us; his maxim is said to be that "the actor should adapt himself to the part, not the part to the actor;" and no one who has seen him play can accuse him of preaching what he does not practise. It is, indeed, impossible to bestow more care and attention on a part than he does :

his personations are so truly finished, so admirably correct, as to render each new character assumed by him a perfect study. Look, manner, dress, everything is exactly what it should be; every glance, every gesture is regulated with the same minute forethought, the same mechanical accuracy. And yet, withall this display of art, his acting is eminently natural; his personations are so life-like that you lose sight of the comedian in the character he represents. In *le Bourgeois Gentilhomme*, he is the silly, vain, and credulous citizen; in *la Camaraderie*, he is the fond and confiding, but susceptible, old husband; in *le Gendre d'un Millionnaire*, he is the shrewd calculating man of business, as narrow-minded as he is wealthy.

Samson's chief defect is his voice, which is naturally sharp and grating: he, however, speaks with such distinctness that the lowest whisper is perfectly audible. Besides the parts already named, he is admirable as *Rantzau* in *Bertrand et Raton*, and as *Sganarelle* in *le Festin de Pierre*.

#### ANNAIS (M<sup>lle</sup>).

At the age of fifteen, M<sup>lle</sup> Annaïs Aubert, having received some instruction from Baptiste the younger, made her *début* at the Français November 10, 1816, in *l'Épreuve nouvelle* and *la Femme jalouse*. Her success was decisive, but, owing to some *intrigues de coulisses*, her stay at the Français was limited to one year, after which she paid a visit to England, where her pretty face and promising talent were much admired. On her return to Paris she accepted an engagement at the Gymnase, on condition that no songs or *couplets* should be introduced into her parts: she, however, quitted this theatre in three months for the Odéon, where she created *Emma*, in Ancelot's comedy of *l'Homme du Monde*. At length, in 1831, she was prevailed on to return to the Français with the title of *sociétaire*, which she still holds.

M<sup>lle</sup> Annaïs always has played, and will probably always play, the *ingénues*, for which line of characters her diminutive figure and extreme *gentillesse* eminently qualify her. Few actresses of thirty years'

standing would venture to personate a young girl of seventeen, but, as a clever critic has truly remarked, "the Graces have no age, and Anals is one of the family." Like M<sup>lle</sup> Mars, she will appear young to the last, and marvellous indeed is her power of warding off the attacks of that insidious enemy, Old Time. Seeing her at a distance, and without a *lorgnette*, one would never imagine the disparity that exists between her own age and that of the character she represents; her figure is extremely youthful, her voice is fresh and clear, and her manner is charmingly graceful. It has been well said that if M<sup>lle</sup> Mars has been rightly styled the *diamond* of the Théâtre-Français, M<sup>lle</sup> Anals may with equal justice be called its *pearl*. Her *Duke of York* in *les Enfants d'Edouard* is a most exquisite piece of acting, and she still plays *Chérubin* in *le Mariage de Figaro* with as much vivacity and *espégle* as she did twenty years ago.

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AVENEL (M<sup>lle</sup>).

M<sup>lle</sup> Marie-Aline Avenel quitted her native town, Elbeuf, at the age of twelve years, for Paris, and, after receiving some instruction from M. St. Aulaire, became subsequently a pupil of the Conservatoire. She first appeared at the Français June 8, 1838, as *Lisette* in *les Folies amoureuses*, and her success was such as to justify the committee in engaging her. Without being either one of the prettiest or most talented actresses of the theatre, she is a very tolerable *soubrette*, and deserves better parts than those which have hitherto been entrusted to her.

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BROHAN (M<sup>lle</sup> AUGUSTINE).

The best *soubrette* on the French stage, since the retirement of her mother, the celebrated actress of the Théâtre-Français and Vaudeville. M<sup>lle</sup> Augustine Brohan's theatrical career has been short but brilliant :

her *début* took place May 18, 1841, as *Dorine* in *Tartufo*, and she was made *sociétaire* in April, 1843.

We know not whether modern dramatists in general (in contradistinction to Molière and Marivaux) consider the part of *soubrette* a mere secondary feature in comedy, or whether (which is most probable) they feel themselves unequal even to imitate the admirable creations of their illustrious predecessors, but certain it is that the original characters which have as yet been confided to M<sup>lle</sup> Brohan have been, with scarcely one exception, utterly unworthy of her talent. And yet, tame and commonplace as they are, she has infused some life into them; and, under the vivifying influence of her gay and cheerful-spirit, the feebly written phrases of her authors have seemed almost witty. Let M<sup>lle</sup> Brohan rely, not on these ephemeral productions, but on her old friends, Molière, Beaumarchais, and Marivaux; let her, by turns, be the saucy *Nicole*, the sprightly *Suzanne*, and the *piquante Lisette*; and let her avoid as she would a pestilence such quicksands to her talent as her modern creations in *la Tutrice* and *Un Homme de Bien*.

#### DENAIN (M<sup>lle</sup>).

M<sup>lle</sup> Elisa Denain, after studying three years at the Conservatoire, where she obtained the first prize for declamation, made a successful *début* at the Théâtre-Français, June 8, 1840, as *Agnès* in *l'École des Femmes*, and *Rosine* in *le Barbier de Séville*, and was engaged from September 7 of the same year. While still *pensionnaire*, she created *M<sup>me</sup> de Nohan* in *le Mari à la Campagne*, as well as parts in *les Burgraves* and *Oscar*; and, being made *sociétaire* in the place of M<sup>lle</sup> Plessy, after the departure of that actress for St. Petersburg, she has since succeeded the fair fugitive in several of her most important characters.

M<sup>lle</sup> Denain is not absolutely pretty, but the expression of her countenance is very pleasing, and her manners are lady-like and elegant; she dresses in excellent taste, and her figure and carriage are irreproachable. That she has talent, no one who has seen her perform can deny; but whether a sweet voice, an agreeable and distinct utterance,

and a graceful and quiet simplicity of look and gesture are sufficient attributes to form an actress of high comedy, is rather doubtful. At all events, M<sup>lle</sup> Denain has already given ample proofs of courage and perseverance; she has not only appeared in M<sup>lle</sup> Plessy's best and most popular characters, but has even dared to undertake a part in which her predecessor failed, and in which every actress since M<sup>lle</sup> Mars has been equally unsuccessful, that of *Célimène* in *le Misanthrope*. It would be unfair to judge M<sup>lle</sup> Denain by the standard of M<sup>lle</sup> Mars : suffice it to say that her conception of this most difficult character was little inferior to that of M<sup>lle</sup> Plessy. In this particular case, therefore, the public, though they may not be gainers by the change, can hardly complain of being losers.

#### DESMOUSSEAUX (M<sup>lle</sup>).

Daughter of the elder and niece of the younger Baptiste. Her family may indeed be called a family of comedians, her grandfather and her grandmother having been artists of reputation in the provinces, and moreover *protégés* of Voltaire; and she herself claiming relationship with M<sup>lle</sup> Hus, formerly of the Théâtre-Français, Bourlouis, of the Odéon, Féréol, of the Opéra-Comique, and last, not least, M<sup>lle</sup> Dorval.

M<sup>lle</sup> Baptiste was born in 1790, and made her first *début* at the Français in 1815. After playing *soubrettes* fourteen times, she quitted that line of parts for the confidants in tragedy, receiving from April 1, 1818, an annual salary of 2,000 francs. Previously to her being made a *sociétaire* seven years after, she married Desmousseaux, at that time an actor of the Français, but who had been originally intended for the bar. She then took the *duîgnes* or old women's parts, in which peculiar line she is without a rival.

Among her best assumptions in the ancient *répertoire*, we may instance M<sup>lle</sup> Pernelle in *Tartufe*, and M<sup>lle</sup> Argante in *les Fausses Confidences*; she is also admirable as M<sup>lle</sup> d'Aigueperre in *le Mari à la Campagne*.

M<sup>lle</sup> Desmousseaux is one of the few remaining actresses of the old

school, one of the last representatives of *la haute comédie*; equal to most of her contemporaries in dramatic talent, and their superior in what is even more important—dramatic tact. The *digné* of the present day is too apt to overact her parts: with her comedy often degenerates into mere buffoonery, and dignity is supposed to consist in stiff starched attitudes, and an unnatural primness of look and manner. M<sup>lle</sup> Desmousseaux, on the contrary, can be amusing without being vulgar, and can represent successively a *grande dame* and a *bourgeoise* without caricaturing either the one or the other. She has but one superior, and that one not on the French stage, nor is it any discredit to an actress, however great may be her talent or reputation, to be pronounced inferior to our own incomparable Mrs. Glover.

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MANTE (M<sup>lle</sup>).

During a temporary absence of M<sup>lle</sup> Mars from the Théâtre-Français, M<sup>lle</sup> Mante, under the auspices of Granger, at that time one of the professors of the Conservatoire, made a most brilliant *début*, September 17, 1822, as *Célimène* in *le Misanthrope*, and *Hortense* in *l'Amour et la Raison*. She was then but seventeen years old, and remarkably handsome, and the public, in their admiration of her beauty, forgot their allegiance to their favourite M<sup>lle</sup> Mars, so far as to pronounce the young *débutante* her superior. This defection, however, was but momentary; M<sup>lle</sup> Mars had only to show herself once in order to regain her former empire over the *habitués* of the Français, and her discomfited rival sank, almost without a struggle, into comparative obscurity.

From this time, M<sup>lle</sup> Mante's merits were as unjustly depreciated as they had hitherto been unjustly extolled. Little or no opportunity was given her of re-establishing herself in the good graces of the public; and, had she not wisely resolved to forsake the line of characters she had hitherto played for others, which in no degree interfered with the *répertoire* of M<sup>lle</sup> Mars, her stay at the Français would probably have been short. By thus prudently withdrawing from a contest which must have terminated in her own utter discomfiture, she gradually became a



favourite; the public, with all their admiration for M<sup>lle</sup> Mars, could still afford, now that all comparison between them was at an end, to bestow applause and encouragement on her *ci-devant* rival.

M<sup>lle</sup> Mante is now no longer young, and the tendency to *embonpoint*, which had already manifested itself in the earlier portion of her career, has so sensibly increased of late years, as to render her speedy retreat from the stage by no means improbable. This is the more to be lamented, as her loss cannot easily be replaced; few, if any, actresses of the present day could attempt, with a fair hope of success, such characters as *la Maréchale* in *les Trois Chapeaux*, or the *Duchess of Marlborough* in *le Verre d'Eau*.

M<sup>lle</sup> Mante, who is said to bear a strong resemblance to M<sup>lle</sup> Clairon, has many sterling qualities, and, above all, that excellent *tenue*, that quiet easy dignity of the old school, which is fast disappearing from the stage. Her voice is clear, distinct, and *mordant*; her gestures are correct and natural, and her manners lady-like and unaffected. Like M<sup>lle</sup> Desmousseaux, she is more than an *actress*, she is an *artist*.

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#### MÉLINGUE (M<sup>lle</sup>).

M<sup>lle</sup> Théodorine, by which name the subject of our sketch is far better known than by that of her husband, was destined at an early age to become an actress, and was admitted among the pupils of the Conservatoire. In her anxiety, however, to escape from the drudgery of study and to *act*, she sought for and obtained an engagement at the Gymnase, where, shortly after the Revolution of July, she occupied a modest place in what was then considered the best company in Paris.

At that time, Léontine Fay reigned supreme on the Boulevard Bonne-Nouvelle, and M<sup>lle</sup> Théodorine, preferring to be *Queen* at the Folies-Dramatiques rather than subject at the Gymnase, accepted the terms offered her by the director of the former theatre, and made a brilliant *début* in *la Comédienne improvisée*. It is said that the manager of another more important theatre, in search of a leading melodramatic actress, saw her there, but found her too young. "Engage her for several years," said

a friend, "and you will find that fault diminish every day." The manager, however, declined. Two years later, he was coming out of the Ambigu one evening, after seeing M<sup>lle</sup> Théodrine play in *Héloïse et Abélard*, when he met his friend of the Folies. "Ah!" said the manager, "I have just seen the most admirable creature! marvellously intelligent, with a noble and elegant bearing, and a voice full of energy and feeling. I must engage her at any price."—"Why did you not take her two years ago?" said his friend quietly.—"Two years ago! where was she?"—"At the Folies."—"I never saw her."—"Yes, you found her too young."—"What! it was her you talked about?"—"Herself." The manager paused an instant, then replied: "In our days, my good sir, one must see a miracle before one believes it, and in a few months this marvel will be in my company."—"Don't be too sure of that."—"What will prevent her?"—"The Théâtre-Français, where she has signed an engagement this morning."

So far all was true, but M<sup>lle</sup> Théodrine never came out at the Français. Not finding any parts there to her mind, she broke her engagement, and accepted another at the Galté, then under the management of Bernard Léon, at a salary of 10,000 francs. Creditors, however, assailed the manager on all sides, and the theatre was suddenly closed. She then appeared at the Porte-Saint-Martin as *Rita l'Espagnole*, and soon after married Mélingue, with whom she was subsequently engaged at the Ambigu. There M<sup>me</sup> Mélingue created a great sensation by her performance of *Madeleine*, in which she displayed many admirable dramatic qualities: it is indeed to her acting in this piece that she owes her present position at the Français, her return to which theatre was effected as follows.

On *les Burgraves*, by Victor Hugo, being put into rehearsal, the part of an aged female slave was given to M<sup>lle</sup> Maxime; but the author, dissatisfied with her conception of the part, withdrew it from her, and offered it to M<sup>me</sup> Mélingue, who, without having even made a *début*, was received as *sociétaire*.

Since then, her career has been less triumphant than before; the opportunities afforded her of displaying her talent have been few and far between, and even on those occasions she has proved herself to be rather an actress of drama than of tragedy. Her figure is noble and

commanding, and her features are extremely expressive, but there is an energetic vehemence in her tone and manner, and a tendency to overacting, which ill accord with the sober and classic dignity of Corneille or Racine. In drama she has been more fortunate : *Doña Sol* in *Hernani* is better adapted to her peculiar powers than either the *Me-ropé* or the *Clytemnestre* of Voltaire, which last character she assumed for the first time on the revival of *Oreste* for the farewell benefit of Firmin. Nevertheless, we cannot but think that she has lost far more than she has gained by her transmigration from the Boulevard, and we would fain see her once more at the Ambigu, renewing as M<sup>lle</sup> Mélingue the successes and triumphs of Théodrine (1).

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MIRECOUR (M<sup>me</sup>).

One of the two tragedy confidants attached to the Français, M<sup>me</sup> Thénard being the other, M<sup>me</sup> Mirecour's maiden name was Fresson, and she was formerly attached to a Boulevard theatre.

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NOBLET (M<sup>lle</sup> ALEXANDRINE).

Younger sister of M<sup>lle</sup> Lise Noblet, and of M<sup>me</sup> Alexis Dupont, ex-dan-  
seuses of the Opera. M<sup>lle</sup> Alexandrine's first appearance at the Français took place in 1829, in *la Femme Jalouse* and *les Jeux de l'Amour et du Hasard* : she was received with great favour by the public, but falling a victim, like M<sup>lle</sup> Anaïs, to the intrigues and jealousy of some of her comrades, she applied in vain for an engagement. The committee of the Théâtre-Français soon had reason to repent of their decision, for M<sup>lle</sup> Noblet, transferring her valuable services to the Odéon, filled both the theatre and the treasury by her excellent acting as *Poulx* in *Stockholm et Fontainebleau*, and as *Agnès Sorel* in *Charles VII.* On M. Ha-

(1) *Théodrine* in *Madame de Tenille* is one of the latest and best creations of this clever actress.

rel's quitting the Odéon to become lessee of the Porte-Saint-Martin, M<sup>lle</sup> Noblet accompanied him, and by her brilliant creation of *Jenny* in *Richard d'Arlington* became as popular among the Boulevard play-goers as she had previously been in the Faubourg Saint-Germain. At length, May 16, 1833, she reappeared at the Français in the same character performed by her on her first *début*, that of *Sylvia* in *les Jeux de l'Amour et du Hasard*, and was shortly after received as *sociétaire*.

M<sup>lle</sup> Noblet is an agreeable actress in comedy, but we think that for her own sake she ought to abandon tragedy, in which she is seen to the greatest disadvantage by the side of M<sup>lle</sup> Rachel, and even of M<sup>lle</sup> Rimblot.

#### RACHEL (M<sup>lle</sup>).

M<sup>lle</sup> Rachel Félix was born February 28, 1821, at Munf, in the canton of Arau in Switzerland; her father is a native of Metz, and her mother's maiden name was Esther Haya. After travelling about for some time from fair to fair (the father being by profession a hawker), the family settled in the environs of Lyons, from whence, after a stay of two years, they came to Paris, and established themselves in a poor dwelling in the Place de Grève.

Were we to find space for all the anecdotes, for the most part partly apocryphal, which have appeared in print concerning M<sup>lle</sup> Rachel's childhood, we should have little difficulty in filling a volume : suffice it to say that in 1831 she was taken by her father to M. Choron, who had established a singing-class at his house in the Rue Monsigny, and was admitted among his pupils. Ten months after, she began to attend Saint Aulaire's (1) class of declamation, and one of her first, if not her very first appearance in public took place at the Théâtre Molière, on which occasion she played *Hermione* in *Andromaque*. M. Védel, then treasurer of the Français, was present at this representation, and spoke in such high terms of her acting that the manager, M. Jouslin de la

(1) Formerly an actor of the Théâtre-Français.

Salle, went in his turn to see her play *Aménide* in *Tancrede*, and procured her immediately after an order of admittance to the Conservatoire, dated October 27, 1836 (1). From this day she was placed under the tuition of Messrs. Michelot, Samson, and Provost, but it does not appear either that her professors entertained a very favourable idea of her talents, or that they anticipated the possibility of her profiting to any great extent by their instructions.

It was while playing one evening at the Salle Chantierine that she attracted the notice of M. Poirson, at that time manager of the Gymnase; her acting pleased him so much, that he at once offered her an engagement for three years, at the rate of 3,000 francs for the first year, 4,000 for the second, and 5,000 for the third, which she accepted, and made her first *début* at the ancient Théâtre de Madame, April 24, 1837, in a new piece written for the occasion, and called *la Vendéenne*. She was well, but not enthusiastically received, nor was her *début* attended with any unusual sensation. With regard to her quitting the Gymnase for the Français, there are two accounts which it is difficult to reconcile: according to one it would appear that M. Poirson voluntarily offered to cancel her engagement with him from a wish to be of real service to her, and himself procured her admission to the Français. The other account, which is probably the correct one, states that M. Védel, who had succeeded M. Jouslin de la Salle as manager, was invited by Samson, from whom M<sup>lle</sup> Rachel was then receiving instructions, to come and hear one of his pupils recite. He did so, and offered her an engagement, which she declined, saying she had no power to quit the Gymnase without the permission of M. Poirson. The latter, however, on being applied to by M. Védel, agreed to cancel the engagement existing between M<sup>lle</sup> Rachel and himself, and a new one was signed, according to the terms of which the young actress became a *pensionnaire* of the Théâtre-Français, at a salary of 4,000 francs for the first year.

Her *début* took place June 12, 1838, and the character selected for the occasion was *Camille* in *les Horaces*. As is generally the case in

(1) Previous to becoming a pupil of the Conservatoire, M<sup>lle</sup> Rachel had occasionally performed at the Hôtel Castellane; and it was there that the celebrated M<sup>me</sup> d'Abraham said to her: "An actress who plays as you play is destined to regenerate the French stage."

summer, the house was but thinly attended, and the few spectators present were far from expecting the treat in store for them. Indeed, a *début* at the Théâtre-Français during what is professionally called the *dead season* is usually more productive of *ennui* than of pleasure to the audience, the interval between May and September being invariably selected for the maiden essays of the pupils of the Conservatoire, the majority of whom are little better than so many automata, with but one object in view, namely, that of copying with the utmost exactness every look, gesture, and even inflection of voice of their different professors. As long as they succeed in pausing where Talma paused, or in sitting down previous to reciting a particular passage, because M<sup>lle</sup> Mars did so before them, they are content, and their instructors also : they are not to interpret Corneille and Molière according to their own feelings or ideas, but according to the ancient traditions of the stage. It is precisely this mechanical and servile imitation of their predecessors which renders nine out of every ten *débutants* mere mimics, by whom the defects of their great prototypes are reproduced with as much, if not more care and attention than their merits. The public, therefore, naturally look forward to every fresh *début* with as little curiosity as if they were apprized of a change of performances by the puppets of the *Théâtre-Séraphin*; and it is on this account and no other that the audience on such occasions is mainly composed of personal friends either of the *débutant* or his professors, with here and there a few grey-headed *habitues* of the theatre, who go to sleep in their stalls, and assemble during the *entr'actes* in the *foyer*, where they talk of Fleury and M<sup>lle</sup> Contat, of Larive and M<sup>lle</sup> Duchesnois, and if they *do* allude to the unfortunate tyro whom they have *not* heard, it is with a contemptuous shrug of the shoulders, and a "*Ce n'est pas ça, ce n'est pas ça!*"

M<sup>lle</sup> Rachel's appearance had a miraculous effect on these old *abonnés* of the Français : she not only surprised them, but she *kept them awake*. They stared at each other, utterly confounded by her disregard of all traditions and real energy. The very performers were startled by her originality, and by the new meaning and force given to a word or a phrase by her way of uttering it : as Jules Janin said of her, "You must not ask her before the piece begins how she

will say a certain sentence, for she cannot tell you; the impulse is momentary and spontaneous. She is like the Pythoness of Virgil, first pale, her body bent, her arms hanging down; but on the arrival of the God, her exhausted nature recovers its animation, the fire mounts from her soul to her eye, her heart throbs violently, and sends forth the breath of passion and energy. She appears like an animated Grecian statue, so classic is her form."

Nothing will show the gradual influence of M<sup>lle</sup> Rachel on the receipts of the Théâtre Français more clearly than the following statement (1).

DATE.	CHARACTER.	GROSS RECEIPTS.
1838. June 12.	Camille in <i>les Horaces</i> .	752 francs.
— — 16.	Emilie in <i>Cinna</i> .	558
— — 23.	Camille.	303
— July 9.	Hermione in <i>Andromaque</i> .	373
— — 11.	Emilie.	342
— — 15.	Hermione.	740
— Aug. 9.	Aménaïde in <i>Tancrède</i> .	620
— — 12.	<i>id.</i>	422
— — 16.	Eriphyle in <i>Iphigénie</i> .	715
— — 18.	Camille.	594
— — 22.	Aménaïde.	800
— — 26.	Hermione.	1,225
— — 30.	Aménaïde.	650
— Sept. 4.	Hermione.	620
— — 9.	Aménaïde.	2,048
— — 11.	Camille.	1,304
— — 15.	Hermione.	1,218
— — 17.	Aménaïde.	1,118
— — 23.	Hermione.	2,129
— — 27.	Emilie.	3,150
— — 29.	<i>id.</i>	2,400
— Oct. 3.	Hermione.	4,281
— — 5.	Monime in <i>Mithridate</i> .	3,660

(1) For this we are indebted to a clever little work, entitled 'La Comédie Française depuis 1830.'

1838	Oct. 9.	<i>id.</i>	.	.	4,640
—	— 12.	Hermione	.	.	5,529
—	— 17.	Camille.	.	.	4,440
—	— 19.	Hermione	.	.	6,131

During the month of October, the receipts of the treasury exceeded 100,000 francs. The natural result of this flourishing state of finances was the augmentation of M<sup>lle</sup> Rachel's salary, first from 4,000 francs to 8,000, and afterwards to 20,000, without counting *feux* (1) and other *gratifications*. In 1839 she received in all nearly 60,000 francs, and in 1840 the same sum, with three months' leave of absence. In 1841 she was received among the *sociétaires*, with a fixed salary of 42,000 francs, and a *congé* of three months, the profits arising from which amounted in 1845 to upwards of 70,000 francs.

M<sup>lle</sup> Rachel's career has hitherto been signalized by many triumphs and few reverses : her performance of *Roxane* in *Bojazet*, which was at first severely criticized, Jules Janin even going so far as to affirm that she would *never* make a good *Roxane*, has since been crowned with success, and her *Phèdre*, though pronounced by many inferior to that of M<sup>lle</sup> Maxime, has proved by far the most attractive of all her rôles, the mere announcement of this tragedy, no matter how frequently repeated, sufficing to attract half the play-goers in Paris to the doors of the Théâtre Français (2). In comedy, she has not been so successful ;

(1) Most of the leading actors and actresses receive, under the title of *feux*, in addition to their regular appointments, a certain sum for every performance, which varies according to the number of acts in which they appear. In some cases the amount of *feux* nearly equals the entire annual salary.

(2) M<sup>me</sup> Blaze de Bury says, with reference to M<sup>lle</sup> Rachel's conception of this character : — " We remember to have seen M<sup>lle</sup> Duchesnois in this part (her most famous one), and we have since often had the pleasure of studying M<sup>lle</sup> Rachel's performance of it. The difference between the two must have been witnessed to be imagined. M<sup>lle</sup> Duchesnois' personation of the Athenian Queen was marked with strong characters of grandeur and dignity, and in the impressions against the course she was insignificant ; but from the first moment M<sup>lle</sup> Rachel appears, we feel that 'the daughter of Minos and Pasiphaë' is actually before us. She is, indeed, according to the poet's expression :

'Une femme mourante et qui cherche à mourir.'

Life is all but extinct, and as she sinks backward in her chair, her head supported upon the bosom of Otho, we have at once an image of that unfortunate princess, who, in her fits of melancholy madness, employed her listless fingers in pricking holes with a hair-pin in the leaves of a myrtle tree. Bending under the weight of her purple robes and her diadem, the royal victim seems to fade away almost before our eyes ; and the vital spark trembles within its frail tenement as flickers an expiring flame in an alabaster lamp. There is in the wan and wadded face of M<sup>lle</sup> Rachel a something unearthly, an unnatural transparency, a sort of *lighting from within*, that is indescribably poetical ; and



the critics, with almost the sole exception of M. Théophile Gautier (1), being of opinion that the union of Thalia and Melpomene in the person of M<sup>lle</sup> Rachel was not merely difficult, but utterly impossible.

Among other defects with which this admirable actress has been charged, is that of "crumbling and chewing" her words, for the sake of making an effect by abruptly pausing at the close of a sentence. This is unjust : her utterance, even when she lowers her voice to a whisper, is peculiarly distinct, and her delivery, though bearing no earthly resemblance to the monotonous sing-song of modern French tragedians, with whom the *rhyme* is everything and the *sense* nothing, is neither wanting in poetry nor in precision. She does not come on the stage to recite a lesson, but to speak as the spirit prompts her ; she does not *act*, she *feels* : with her adoption of the Roman or Grecian dress, she adopts the Roman or Grecian character ; she is no longer Rachel, but *Camille* or *Hermione*. This is the great secret of her influence over the masses ; she stands before them, but is not of them ; they have neither time nor inclination to criticise her dress, her manner, or her look ; they are spell-bound by the reality with which she invests each of her personations. She has a power, unknown to other actresses, of rivetting the attention of her audience, and this power consists in her entire ignorance of, and contempt for, the conventional traditions of the stage. She imitates no one, not even herself ; but keeps perpetually alive the curiosity and interest of the spectator by some new reading of a passage, some peculiar look or gesture, suggested by the inspiration of the mo-

her limbs totter, as though, to use the fine image of Euripides, 'they were about to dissolve.' We see that she may with truth say,—

'J'ai langui, j'ai séché dans les feux, dans les larmes.'

and that her eyes, burnt with fever and weeping, may well indeed be 'dazzled by the light of day, no long unseen.'

"How impatiently her unsteady hand strives to relieve her aching brow from the 'vain ornaments' that oppress and overload it: and when, after the expostulations of the nurse, unlistened to, and unheard, she again raises her drooping head, with what mournful majesty she pronounces that magnificent apostrophe to the sun :—

'Noble et brillant auteur d'une triste famille,  
Toi dont ma mère osait se vanter d'être fille,  
Qui peut-être rongis du trouble où tu me vois,  
Sois-tu, je te viens voir pour la dernière fois !'

(1) After saying, "L'intelligence qui a servi pour acquérir un talent doit pouvoir servir pour en acquérir un second; on est capable ou non. Mais parquer le génie dans des compartiments est une invention bizarre," the writer of *la Presse* adds, "Nous croyons qu'avec un peu d'exercice, M<sup>lle</sup> Rachel ne jouerait pas moins bien *Marinette* que *Phèdre*, *Molière* que *Racine*."

ment, and forgotten by her as soon as that moment is past. The very *claqueurs* themselves are puzzled; they know not when to applaud or when to be silent. While reserving their hired enthusiasm until some cabalistic word, the preconcerted signal for its explosion, shall have been pronounced, they are confounded by the legitimate bravos of the audience, who are impelled, by some magical and wholly unexpected effect of her acting, to applaud *for themselves*.

M<sup>lle</sup> Rachel must not be judged by her first performance of a character; on such occasions she is often uncertain and consequently unequal, whereas it is perhaps only on the third or fourth representation, when she has acquired greater confidence in herself or in her own conception of the part, that she is in full possession of her powers. Nature has endowed her with a face and form modelled after the statues of ancient Greece; her figure, though slight, is at once graceful and commanding; her eyes are small, but expressive, and there is a simple majesty in her look, walk, and manner, which Art alone could never give. Her great triumphs have been in parts in which hatred, contempt, or irony form a principal feature; thus, nothing can be finer than her *Camille* in *les Horaces*, especially in the fourth act, when she utters her famous imprecation against Rome. We well remember the thrilling effect produced at the Opera (where she performed for Massol's benefit in the autumn of 1845), by her delivery of the four last lines :

"Puisse-je de mes yeux y voir tomber la foudre,  
Voir ses maisons en cendre et les lauriers en poudre,  
Voir le dernier Romain à son chevalier soupir,  
Moi seule en être cause, et mourir de plaisir."

While she spoke, every eye was fixed on her, in order that not a sound, not a gesture might be lost; her voice, though at times subdued almost to a whisper, came distinct to every ear, so deep, so unbroken was the silence; until at last, when overcome by her own energy, and concentrating all her strength into one final effort, she as it were hissed out the

"Moi seule en être cause, et mourir de plaisir!"

the whole house burst into one simultaneous roar of applause, which was renewed and re-echoed long and loudly as well behind as before the curtain.

Where tenderness or grief, unmixed with the sterner passions, are required, M<sup>lle</sup> Rachel is comparatively ineffective: even *Virginie*, her last and finest creation, though a consummate piece of acting, has not that influence on the spectator which is produced by her performance of *Camille* or *Hermione*. But, whatever be the character sustained by her, whether she plays *Aminéide* or *Jeune d'Arc*, *Électre* or *Catherine de Russie*, the ancient or the modern *répertoire*, she is always great, always admirable. Rachel is not of those *génies incompris* who have only a posthumous celebrity to look forward to; her talent, like that of M<sup>lle</sup> Mars, has been acknowledged and appreciated by her own contemporaries; and, though but a few years have elapsed since she made an almost unnoticed *début* on the boards of a minor theatre, her name is now known through Europe as that of the first tragic actress of her day (1).

#### RÉBECCA (M<sup>lle</sup>).

M<sup>lle</sup> Rebecca Félix, one of the younger sisters of M<sup>lle</sup> Rachel, after playing *Chimène* in *le Cid* and various other important tragic characters with her brother Raphaël at the Odéon, during the management of M. Lireux, made her *début* at the Français, July 1, 1845, as *Palmyre* in Voltaire's tragedy of *Mahomet*. She now ranks among the most promising *pensionnaires* of the theatre; and on the recent revival of

(1) We select two out of the thousand and one anecdotes which have appeared in various biographical notices of M<sup>lle</sup> Rachel, without, however, guaranteeing their veracity. One evening, after performing before His Majesty Louis Philippe, she was presented to him at the conclusion of the tragedy by one of the actresses. The King took her trembling hand in his, and assured her that every time he saw her it was with increased pleasure, and that she had played admirably. She in her confusion addressed him simply as "Monsieur," and on being afterwards blamed for it by her *chaperon*, replied that, "being in the habit of conversing only with the Kings of Greece and Rome, she was ignorant of the form of speech used towards the monarchs of the present day." On the following morning, continues the narrator, His Majesty sent her a thousand franc note, being his first gift to any actor or actress since his accession.

The other anecdote is as follows. M<sup>lle</sup> Rachel being invited to a lady's house to meet the Vicomte de Chateaubriand, the venerable poet said to her in a melancholy tone: "How sad it is to think, Mademoiselle, that such as you should be born as we are about to die." "Sir," she replied, "there are some men who never die."

*Oreste* played *Isménie* to M<sup>lle</sup> Rachel's *Électre* with much feeling and simplicity.

M<sup>me</sup> Rébecca, unlike her sister, is blonde, and rather below the middle height; her countenance without being pretty has a pleasing expression, and her voice is agreeable, but deficient in power. It would be unfair to judge so young a child by the standard of older and more experienced actresses. Nature has given her talent, but that talent is as yet in its infancy. Unless the bud meets with kindly and gentle treatment, how can we hope for perfection in the flower!

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RIMBLLOT (M<sup>lle</sup>).

M<sup>lle</sup> Julie Rimblot is a pupil of Beauvallet, and played *Aménai*de to his *Tancrède*, on the occasion of her *début* at the Français, July 12, 1845. She is tall, with a stately figure, and a handsome though rather broad face; her eyes are bright but inexpressive, and from the extreme immobility of her features and the smoothness of her marble brow she has been aptly styled "a fine cameo." She has a pleasing voice and a good delivery, and her gestures are usually correct and natural; nor is she deficient, notwithstanding the statue-like repose of her countenance, in animation, energy, or sensibility.

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SAINT-HILAIRE (M<sup>lle</sup> AMÉLIE).

This young and promising *soubrette*, after playing the *Fée Topaze* in *la Biche au Bois* for upwards of a hundred nights at the Porte-Saint-Martin, made her first appearance at the Théâtre Français in August, 1845, in *les Folies amoureuses*, and has since been regularly engaged there.

SOLIÉ (M<sup>lle</sup>).

One of the youngest and best-looking *ingénues* of the Comédie-Française, whose performance of *Agnès* in *l'École des Femmes* on the occasion of her *début*, June 2, 1845, procured her an engagement as *pensionnaire*. She has a pretty face, an agreeable voice, and a quiet lady-like manner, and is in every respect an acquisition to the theatre.

THÉNARD (M<sup>me</sup>).

Whenever M<sup>lle</sup> Rachel's name is on the *affiche*, it is generally accompanied by that of one of her satellites, M<sup>me</sup> Thénard or Mirecour. M. Latour de Saint-Ybars, in his tragedy of *Virginie*, has politely given each of them a part, doubtless in order that the public, by seeing them on the stage together, might have an opportunity of deciding as to their respective merits.

VOLNYS (M<sup>me</sup>).

In November 1816, M<sup>lle</sup> Léontine Fay made her first appearance on any stage at (we believe) Boulogne-sur-Mer (1) in *Adolphe et Clara*. She was then five years old, and her singularly precocious talent and infantine graces procured her the name of *la petite merveille*. At eight years of age she commenced a professional tour through Belgium and part of France, creating everywhere the greatest enthusiasm, and in 1821 took Paris by storm by her performance of *la Petite Sœur* and *le Mariage Enfantin* at the Gymnase. She was then so fond of acting that her mother, to ensure her good behaviour, had only to whisper to her: "If you are naughty, you shall not play this evening." It would be difficult indeed to say, such an universal favourite had she become.

(1) Other accounts state that her first theatrical *début* took place at Frankfurt.

whether the actress or the public would have been most disappointed by such a prohibition.

"At that time," says Jacques Arago, the clever blind critic, "the announcement of a new piece, entrusted to the talent of little Léontine, was received like the announcement of a new victory gained by Napoléon." Her *naïveté* and *gentil'esse* (two words which defy translation,) suggested the following quatrain, written by Martainville, soon after her first appearance at the Gymnase :

" Vous qui cherchez une actrice parfaite,  
Allez au Gymnase, et soudain  
Vous retrouverez Saint-Aubin (1)  
En retrouvant votre torquette."

Léontine Fay was not only a clever, but a witty child. Previous to her arrival in Paris, and during one of her engagements in a provincial town, she was accosted one day, while walking with her father, by one of her great admirers, who said to her: "Mademoiselle, you have made me shed tears; you play *Paul et Virginie* to-morrow, so I will bring two pocket handkerchiefs with me to the theatre." "Sir," replied the *petite merveille*, then only nine years old, "I recommend you to bring three the day after to-morrow, for Mama plays *Camille*."

Subsequently, being addressed by one of the confraternity of Paris *journalistes* with a familiar "Good day, my little puss," she answered quickly: "I am not a *journaliste*, Sir, I scratch nobody."

After passing the intervening years between childhood and womanhood in the provinces with her father and family, she returned to the Gymnase at the age of seventeen, and soon after married M. Volnys. Their joint reputation procured them both an advantageous engagement at the Théâtre Français, where M<sup>re</sup> Volnys played with great success in *la Camaraderie*, *Louise de Lignerolles*, and other novelties of the time. Neither husband nor wife, however, felt at ease in their new position; a succession of intrigues, fomented by the jealousy of their comrades, soon forced them to return to the Gymnase, where they remained until the departure of Bouffé from that theatre, and its consequent decline in public favour induced M<sup>re</sup> Volnys to contract a fresh engagement with the committee of the Français, where she reappeared

(1) In allusion to M<sup>re</sup> St. Aubin, a celebrated actress and singer of the Opéra Comique.

early in 1844 in her original character of *Louise de Lignerolles*. She has since added two important creations to her *répertoire* : those of *Madame de Silly* in *la Femme de quarante ans*, and *Ursule* in *le Mari à la Campagne*.

M<sup>me</sup> Volnys, like Queen Elizabeth, is neither too tall nor too short ; her eyes are of a deep black and admirably expressive, and harmonize perfectly with the jetty lustre of her hair. She has a clear and melodious voice, a good delivery, and an excellent *tenue* ; and her acting, far from being tame or spiritless, inclines rather to the opposite extreme, betraying at times even too much animation and energy.

This is, however, a fault on the right side, and infinitely preferable to the monotonous sing-song and mechanical gestures of those performers, unhappily too numerous, with whom Art is everything and Nature nothing. Whatever character M<sup>me</sup> Volnys undertakes is sure to be played *in earnest* : she may now and then be carried too far by the intensity of her own feelings (for hers is no fictitious emotion !) ; she may forget in the excitement of the moment some conventional attitude, some traditional look or tone of voice, but is she the less popular on that account ? On the contrary, it is to those very defects, if defects they can be called, that she owes her reputation, a reputation predicted twenty-nine years ago by the admirers of *la petite merveille*, the graceful and intelligent Léontine Fay.

#### WORMS (M<sup>lle</sup>).

M<sup>lle</sup> Eugénie Worms succeeded M<sup>lle</sup> Doze early in 1845, as *Hortense* in *la Femme de quarante ans*, and *Pauline* in *le Mari à la Campagne*. In point of beauty, she is very far inferior to her predecessor, who was, and no doubt still is, a remarkably pretty woman (1) ; as an actress,

(1) M<sup>lle</sup> Almée Doze was born in the old castle of Pontalec, at Hennebont, October 30, 1823. When three years old she was so fair and pretty, that her mother was called *la mère de la jolie petite fille*. While at Dieppe, she was much admired by the Duchesse de Berry, whom she accompanied to the promenade, and by whose *grand écuyer* she was carried when she became tired. As she grew up, she gradually displayed a taste for acting, and eventually made a successful *début* at the Théâtre-Français, as *Pauline* in *le Mari à la Campagne* ; but had hardly played a year when she retired (we fear for ever) from the stage.

M<sup>lle</sup> Doze was not only a very agreeable actress, but a most charming and pretty

M<sup>lle</sup> Worms has sufficient talent for her own line of parts, the *ingénues*, who (especially at the Théâtre Français, where they have nothing to sing) have little to do beyond looking as simple and interesting as they can.

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Among the best and most frequently performed pieces of the *répertoire*, ancient as well as modern, of the Théâtre-Français, are the following :

Le Tartufe. . . . .	Molière.
Les Femmes savantes. . . . .	<i>Id.</i>
Le Misanthrope. . . . .	<i>Id.</i>
L'École des Maris . . . . .	<i>Id.</i>
L'École des Femmes. . . . .	<i>Id.</i>
Le Médecin malgré lui. . . . .	<i>Id.</i>
Le Malade Imaginaire. . . . .	<i>Id.</i>
Les Précieuses Ridicules . . . . .	<i>Id.</i>
L'Avare. . . . .	<i>Id.</i>
Les Fourberies de Scapin. . . . .	<i>Id.</i>
Georges Dandin. . . . .	<i>Id.</i>
Andromaque. . . . .	Racine. (1)
Phèdre. . . . .	<i>Id.</i>
Les Plaideurs. . . . .	<i>Id.</i>
Mithridate. . . . .	<i>Id.</i>
Bajazet. . . . .	<i>Id.</i>
Le Cid. . . . .	Corneille.
Les Horaces. . . . .	<i>Id.</i>
Polyeucte. . . . .	<i>Id.</i>

woman : we have rarely seen a sweeter or more prepossessing countenance, or an eye beaming with more sparkling gaiety and good humour. Her retirement is a loss to the stage, but perhaps a gain to literature, a work from her pen having been for some time announced as about to appear in the *feuilleton* of one of the newspapers.

(1) For a detailed biographical and critical notice of Racine, we refer our readers to M<sup>me</sup> Blazé de Bury's "Racine and the French Classical Drama," published in Knight's Weekly Library : a more interesting and eloquently written volume has seldom appeared. The Edinburgh Review for June, 1843, contains an admirable memoir of Molière by the same talented authoress.



Les Jeux de l'Amour et du Hasard.	Marivaux.
Le Legs. . . . .	<i>Id.</i>
Le Joueur. . . . .	Regnard.
Le Glorieux. . . . .	Destouches.
Hernani. . . . .	Victor Hugo.
Virginie. . . . .	Latour.
Louis XI. . . . .	Casimir Delavigne.
Les Enfans d'Édouard. . . . .	<i>Id.</i>
Les Vêpres Siciliennes. . . . .	<i>Id.</i>
Don Juan d'Autriche. . . . .	<i>Id.</i>
L'École des Vieillards. . . . .	<i>Id.</i>
Les Demoiselles de Saint-Cyr. . . . .	Alexandre Dumas.
Mademoiselle de Belle-Isle. . . . .	<i>Id.</i>
Henri III. . . . .	<i>Id.</i>
Valérie. . . . .	Scribe.
La Camaraderie. . . . .	<i>Id.</i>
Le Verre d'Eau. . . . .	<i>Id.</i>
Une Chaîne. . . . .	<i>Id.</i>
Oscar. . . . .	<i>Id.</i>
Les Suites d'un Bal masqué. . . . .	M <sup>me</sup> de Bawr.
Les Héritiers. . . . .	Alexandre Duval.
La Jeunesse d'Henri V. . . . .	<i>Id.</i>
La Marquise de Senneterre. . . . .	Mélesville and Duveyrier.
Le Mari à la Campagne. . . . .	Bayard.
Le Roman d'une Heure. . . . .	Hoffmann.
La Femme de Quarante Ans. . . . .	Galoppe d'Onquaire.
Marie. . . . .	M <sup>me</sup> Ancelot.
La Belle-Mère et le Gendre. . . . .	Samson.
Un Veuvage. . . . .	<i>Id.</i>
La Famille Poisson. . . . .	<i>Id.</i>

## CHAPTER IV.

### OPÉRA COMIQUE.

SALLE FAVART.

*Manager, M. Buzzet.*

The origin of this theatre may be traced to 1716, in which year one of the managers of the *Théâtres de la Foire* (1) obtained from the Académie Royale de Musique permission for his *troupe* to sing (2). Jean Monnet, by whom a theatre was erected at the Foire Saint-Laurent in 1752, was the first to introduce original music in place of the popular airs hitherto sung by the performers. But the real founder of the Opéra Comique may be said to have been Favart, who, assisted by his

(1) Up to 1595, the actors of the *Théâtres de la Foire* St. Germain and St. Laurent consisted of dogs, cats, monkeys, and even rats, some of the latter animals being so admirably trained as to dance in a grand ballet on a table, while one in particular, a white rat from Lapland, executed a saraband with surpassing grace. The first pieces in which couplets were introduced were acted by puppets, the words being said or sung behind the scenes.

(2) The actors of the *Foires* had been previously forbidden either to speak or sing on the stage; so that when a couplet was to be sung, the performer unfolded a scroll on which the words were written in large characters, the orchestra played the air, and one of the company who had taken his place among the audience, sang the verse, the public joining in chorus.

clever wife, equally renowned as authoress and actress, substituted for such nonsensical jargon as the following :

" Hi, zing, zing, zing,  
Madame la mariée,  
Cla. ela, ela,  
Lira, liroula,  
Gué, gué,  
Le joli panier  
Va danser."

pleasing and poetical couplets. Voltaire's opinion of M<sup>lle</sup> Favart may be ascertained from an extract from one of his letters addressed to her. " You cannot think, Madame, how much I am indebted to you. What you have sent me is full of wit and grace ; indeed, we have now nothing left but the Opéra Comique to sustain the reputation of France. I am sorry for old Melpomene, but the young Thalia of the Hôtel de Bourgogne far eclipses by her charms the ancient majesty of the queen of the theatre." (1)

We cannot refrain from quoting one delicious couplet from *Jeannot et Jeannette*, than which Scribe himself has never imagined anything more graceful.

" Dès que je vois passer Jeannot,  
Tout aussitôt je m'arrête ;  
Quoique Jeannot ne dise mot,  
Près d' lui chacun m' parait bête ;  
Quand il me s'garde, il m'interdit,  
Je deviens rouge comme un' fraise.  
Apparemment que l'on rougit  
Lorsque l'on est bien aise."

From this time, the most celebrated authors, and among others Marmontel and Sedaine, did not disdain to write for the Opéra Comique, the *répertoire* of which became gradually enriched by the *chefs-d'œuvre* of Monsigny, Philidor, and Grétry.

In 1672, the Opéra Comique, in consequence of its union with the Comédie-Italienne (2), quitted the Foire Saint-Laurent for the Hôtel de

(1) M<sup>lle</sup> Favart was born at Avignon, in 1727, and first appeared at the Opéra Comique in 1744. She died April 13, 1773. This charming actress and singer has been well described in the following verses.

" Nature un jour épousa l'Art,  
De leur amour naquit Favart,  
Qui semble tenir de son père  
Tout ce qu'elle doit à sa mère."

(2) As early as 1577, some Italian actors called *l' Gelosi* came to Paris, and from that epoch to the close of the seventeenth century several *troupes* successively visited the

Bourgogne, where the Italians had been installed since 1716, and twenty-one years later, April 28, 1783, the united companies transferred their performances to the then recently erected Salle Favart.

Marie-Antoinette was extremely fond of acting, especially in M<sup>re</sup> Favart's pieces, and caused a theatre to be constructed at Trianon, where she often played before Louis XVI. and his court. One evening, she performed *Annette* in *Annette et Lubin*, and was applauded by all except the King, who most ungallantly hissed her. "Sir," said Marie-Antoinette, coming forward and dropping a rustic courtesy, "If you are not satisfied, you may go to the box office, and your money will be returned." This repartee was much relished by Louis XVI., who was this time the first to applaud.

M<sup>me</sup> Gontier, a celebrated actress and singer towards the end of the last century, was remarkable for her strict observance of all religious duties. This she carried so far, that one evening, previous to the first representation of a new opera, she was seen to cross herself, and heard to say in a low tone with great emotion: "*Mon Dieu! faites-moi la grâce de bien savoir mon rôle!*"

During one of the performances of *les deux Chasseurs et la Laitière*, a terrible storm came on, and the actor who personated the bear was so alarmed by a loud clap of thunder which shook the house just after he had made his *entrée* that, forgetting his singular costume, he got up

French capital; but it was not until 1716 that, under the patronage of the Due d'Orléans, they became permanently established at the Hôtel de Bourgogne.

The pieces performed by them were at first written in Italian, but both authors and actors gradually adopted the French language, and it was then that Marivaux, Florian, and other distinguished writers enriched the *répertoire* with several of their most charming comedies.

Among the *artistes* of note who at different periods mainly contributed by their talents to the prosperity of the Comédie-Italienne, we may mention the celebrated Harlequin Dominique, who was born at Bologna in 1640, and died in Paris in 1688, and his no less famous successor, Carlo Bertinazzi.

Dominique was chosen by his comrades as their spokesman, on the occasion of a dispute between the Comédie-Française and the Comédie-Italienne, respecting the right claimed by the latter to speak French on the stage. The question was submitted to the decision of Louis XIV., and both parties were summoned to his presence. When Baron, in behalf of the Théâtre-Français, had concluded his arguments, denying as was the right of any actors, except those of his theatre, to perform plays written in French, the King made a sign to Dominique to begin. "In which language does your Majesty wish me to speak?" asked the Harlequin quickly. "In whichever you please," replied the King. "I ask no more," said Dominique; "my cause is gained." Louis XIV. smiled at the actor's ingenuity, and said: "My word is given, and I will not retract it."

on his hind legs, crossed himself with his fore paws, and went on with his part amid the laughter of the audience.

In 1789, the opening of a new theatre in the Salle des Tuileries, bearing the aristocratic title of Théâtre de Monsieur, where comic operas were likewise played, became a source of great anxiety to the occupants of the Salle Favart. Its success, however, was never remarkable, and in 1798, seven years after its instalment in the Théâtre Feydeau, it was closed, owing to the failure of the manager. In 1801, the two rival theatres were united under the name of Opéra Comique at the Théâtre Feydeau, the management of which was for about twenty years in the hands of the actors themselves, after the fashion of the present organisation of the Théâtre-Français. During this period, Nicolo, Boieldieu, Méhul, Berton, and Cherubini contributed many admirable productions to the *répertoire*, and up to 1822 the Théâtre Feydeau enjoyed a high degree of prosperity.

Among the *artistes* of talent, male and female, who have flourished at this theatre from its foundation to the close of the last and commencement of the present centuries, we may particularly mention Clairval, surnamed *l'Homme à Bonnes Fortunes*, Laruelle, Caillot, Michu, and Trial, M<sup>me</sup> Trial, and Dugazon. After these came Martin (1), Ellevlou (2), Gavaudan, Ponchard, M<sup>me</sup> Desbrosses, Gavaudan, Belmont (3), and Boulanger.

One of the favourite operas produced at the Théâtre Feydeau was *la Fausse Magie*, and in it one particular air, commencing "*Comme un éclair*," excited general enthusiasm. One evening, a *débutante* appeared in this opera, and had already met with rather an unfavourable reception, when a young man, entering the house in a hurry, anxiously inquired of his neighbour whether the new vocalist had sung "*Comme un éclair*." "*Non, Monsieur*," was the answer; "*elle a chanté comme un âne*."

In 1822, this theatre experienced a series of reverses, and two years

(1) This admirable singer was born in 1764, and retired from the stage in 1823.

(2) Ellevlou quitted the stage in 1813, and died May 6, 1842, aged 71.

(3) M<sup>me</sup> Belmont was for a long time a member of the Vaudeville, where she created, among many other parts, *Fanchon la Filleuse* with immense success. Her *début* at the Opéra Comique took place in 1807.

later, March 30, 1824, a royal decree deprived the *sociétaires* of the administrative power. In 1829, the Opéra Comique, under the management of a privileged director, quitted the Théâtre Feydeau for the Salle Ventadour; but this change of position had for some time no beneficial effect on the treasury, and it was not until after the transmigration of the company to the theatre in the Place de la Bourse, formerly the Nouveautés, and at present occupied by the Vaudeville, that matters began to improve. One manager followed another in rapid succession, and it was not till 1834, in which year M. Crosnier became director, that anything like stability or enterprise was evinced in the administration of this theatre. In May, 1840, the Opéra Comique returned to the Salle Favart, rebuilt since its destruction by fire in 1838 during its occupation by the Italian company, and from that period to the present day its prosperity has been constantly on the increase. About a year ago M. Basset succeeded M. Crosnier in the management, and so ably has he commenced his directorial career, that, however deeply the retirement of his excellent predecessor may be regretted, we do not think that either the theatre or the public are likely to be losers by the change.

We cannot close our notice of the Opéra Comique without briefly mentioning four *artistes*, whose names are inseparably associated with its history, and some of whom have only recently seceded from the company: we allude to M<sup>lle</sup> Jenny Colon, M<sup>rs</sup> Cinti-Damoreau, M<sup>rs</sup> Anna Thillon, and M. Masset. The first of these was born November 5, 1810, her father and mother being both members of the Opéra Comique. She first saw the light in the theatre during the performances, and her nurses were the *dames des chœurs*. At eight years of age she read music at sight, and when very young played Léontine Fay's characters at Nantes.

She then came to Paris accompanied by her sister, a twelvemonth older than herself, and they appeared together at the Théâtre Feydeau, in May, 1822, in *les Petits Savoyards*. After a time, being too old to play the children and too young for the *ingénuités*, M<sup>lle</sup> Jenny accepted an engagement at the Vaudeville, where she created, among other parts, *la Demoiselle de Boutique* and *la Laitière de Montfermeil*. From thence she went to Bordeaux, Bayonne, and London; and on her return to Paris,

after passing eighteen months at the Gymnase, appeared at the Variétés, and remained there four years, creating *Madelon Friquet* and *la Prima Donna*. She then reappeared at the Opéra Comique as *Sarah* with great success, and created *la Reine d'un Jour*. She subsequently quitted Paris for a provincial tour, during which she visited Rouen and Bordeaux, and afterwards sang grand opera at Brussels.

M<sup>lle</sup> Jenny Colon, or rather M<sup>me</sup> Lepus, she having married M. Lepus, a flute-player in the orchestra of the Opéra Comique, died June 5, 1842, after having been for some time in a delicate state of health. We subjoin a description of this celebrated actress and singer, written during her second engagement at the Opéra Comique by M. Théophile Gautier. "Her complexion is delicate and silky, like the leaf of a white camelia or a sheet of rice paper. Though inclining to *embon-point*, she bears less resemblance to a Flemish beauty than to the Venetian *blonda e grassotta* seen in the portraits of Giorgione. Her forehead is high, broad, and more developed than those of women in general : her nose is aquiline, but delicately and finely formed. Her cheeks are oval, her eye-brows light-coloured and *retrety*; her mouth is *piquant*, her chin dimpled, and her hair auburn."

M<sup>lle</sup> Laure-Cinthie Montalant is a *Parisienne*, having been born in the Rue Grange-Batelière, February 6, 1802. After receiving vocal instruction from M. Plantade, she sang at the age of thirteen in several private houses, and became a favorite with Queen Hortense, who called her "sa jolie petite virtuose." Soon after, M. Valabrègue, the husband of M<sup>me</sup> Catalani, engaged her for the Italian Opera. There she made her *début* under the name of M<sup>lle</sup> Cinti as *Cherubino* in *le Nozze di Figaro*, and subsequently sang *Zerlina*, *Rosina*, and several other parts. Being solicited, on the occasion of a benefit at the Académie Royale, to take the part of *Phyllis* in *le Rossignol*, she produced such an effect that the manager wished to engage her, but she refused to cancel the agreement already existing between herself and M. Valabrègue, out of gratitude to the latter. It was at last settled that she should sing at both theatres alternately, and it was not until 1825, two years before her marriage with Damoreau, a provincial tenor of some repute, that she belonged entirely to the Académie Royale. After singing ten years at the Opera,

where she mainly contributed to the success of *Guillaume Tell*, *Moïse*, *le Philtre*, *la Muette de Portici*, and *Robert-le-Diable*, she went to the Opéra Comique, and created *l'Ambassadrice*, and *Angèle* in *le Domino Noir*. She still occasionally sings at concerts, but devotes most of her time to the exercise of her duties as female professor of the Conservatoire. One of her former pupils, M<sup>lle</sup> Nau, has in a great measure inherited the extraordinary flexibility and correct vocalization of her mistress, to whom, however, she is far inferior as a dramatic singer.

We now turn to one of the most delightful vocalists and most fascinating women have that ever trod the French or English stage, M<sup>me</sup> Anna Thillon. Her family name is Hunt, and she was born at Calcutta in 1819. After receiving a good education in London, she quitted England on her father's death for Havre, where she married M. Thillon, *chef d'orchestre* of the Philharmonic society in that town. Her first *début* in Paris took place at the Renaissance, where she played *la Chaste Suzanne* and *Lucie de Lammermoor*, and subsequently, August 11, 1840, appeared at the Opéra Comique. During her engagement there she sang in *Zanetta*, *les Diamans de la Couronne*, *l'Eau Merveilleuse*, *la Part du Diable*, and *Cagliostro*, investing each different character assumed by her with that peculiar charm of which she only knows the secret. She is now in England, and bitterly do we, in common with all her Parisian admirers, regret her absence from the theatre of her former triumphs: the throne so long occupied by her is still vacant, and earnestly do we hope that it will not be long before she once more takes possession of it.

The last of the four artists on our list, Jean-Jacques Masset, was born at Liège in 1811. While at college he acquired a knowledge of instrumental music, though without any intention at that time of studying it professionally. At the age of eighteen he came to Paris, and, after obtaining several prizes at the Conservatoire, became ultimately leader of the orchestra at the Variétés, for which theatre he composed several new vaudeville airs. It was long before he could be persuaded that he possessed an excellent tenor voice, and still longer before he could be prevailed upon to give up the study of instrumental for that of vocal music.

Yielding at last, however, to the repeated solicitations of his friends,



he accepted an engagement offered him by M. Crosnier for the Opéra Comique, and made his *début* there September 19, 1839, in *la Reine d'un Jour*. He subsequently sang *Blondel* in *Richard Cœur de Lion* with such effect as to attract crowded houses every time that opera was played, few revivals ever having been so profitable to the management of any theatre.

Masset quitted the Opéra Comique about a year ago much to the regret of the *habitués*, and is now, we believe, in Italy.

## THE COMPANY.

### AUDRAN (PIERRE-MARIUS).

Born at Aix, September 26, 1816. After receiving some musical instruction from a professor at Marseilles, he sang with success at the principal theatre in that city. He was subsequently engaged at Brussels, Bordeaux, and Lyons, and in May, 1842, made his first appearance at the Opéra Comique in *la Dame Blanche*.

Audran has an agreeable and not unmusical voice, and is an efficient second tenor: his powers, however, are unequal to such parts as that of *Rafael* in *la Part du Diable*, which he would do well not to attempt. *Scipion* in *la Sirène* is one of his best and most successful creations, and he is also heard to advantage as *Mergy* in *le Pré aux Clercs*.

### BUSSINE.

A pupil of the Conservatoire recently transplanted to the Opéra Comique, where he made a successful *début* in December, 1845, as *le Sénéchal* in *Jean de Paris*. Bussine has a fine rich baryton voice, and, making allowance for the inexperience of a *débutant*, is an intelligent actor.

## CARLO.

A very indifferent tenor singer, and an equally indifferent actor.

## CHAIX.

Another pupil of the Conservatoire, with a tolerable bass voice and some knowledge of singing, but little of acting.

## CHOLLET.

Jean-Baptiste-Marie Chollet was born in Paris, May 20, 1798. At eight years of age he was admitted among the choristers of St. Eustache, of which church his father was *Maitre de Chapelle*. Shortly after, the manager of the Italian Opera being in want of a child capable of sustaining a part in a new piece which he was on the point of producing, Chollet's father offered to lend him his little boy, who acquitted himself of his task in a very creditable manner. However, after having once appeared on the boards of a theatre, the ex-chorister had little inclination to resume his original office, and flatly refused to return to St. Eustache. He carried his point so far as to obtain admission to the Conservatoire, and in 1815 we find him a chorus singer at the Opéra Comique.

In 1823 Chollet was at Havre, and there his dramatic career may be said to have fairly commenced : he subsequently made a successful *début* at the Opéra Comique in *le Chaperon Rouge*, and after a brief visit to Brussels returned to Paris, where he created an important part in Herold's *Marie*. When the Opéra Comique was transferred from the Théâtre Feydeau to the Salle Ventadour, Chollet was at the head of the company : it was at this time that his reputation attained its zenith on the production of *Fra-Diavolo* and *Zampa*. He afterwards sang at Paris and Brussels alternately, exciting the greatest enthusiasm wherever he went, and captivating many a tender fair one by his

" Oh ! qu'il est beau,  
Le postillon de Lonjumeau : "

He has, however, for some time remained stationary at the Opéra Comique, where he still retains much of his ancient popularity.

Chollet began by singing baryton parts, but soon discovered that Nature intended him for a tenor ; he has now, comparatively speaking, little voice left ; but the defects of his organ are almost atoned for by the excellence of his method. As an actor, he abounds in gay and original humour, and, even were he unable to sing a note, would still be entitled to rank among the most amusing comedians of the day. In *le Maître de Chapelle*, *le Nouveau Seigneur*, and *les Quatre Fils Aymon*, he is exquisitely droll.

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#### DUVERNOY.

A tolerable actor, who is seen to most advantage where he has little or nothing to sing.

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#### ÉMON (Amédée).

A better musician than singer, having been originally *chef d'orchestre* of two vaudeville theatres. His engagement at the Opéra Comique dates from May, 1839, since which period he has ranked among the useful but unimportant members of the company. He is about thirty-six years old, and is a native of Châteaudun.

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#### GARCIN.

A few steps lower than Émon on the ladder of fame, but very amusing, nevertheless, as *Beppo* in *Fra Diavolo*.

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## GRARD.

In 1838, Grard, whose voice is a bass of excellent quality, became a pupil of the Conservatoire, and made his first appearance at the Opéra Comique, February 2, 1841, in *les Deux Reines*. He has been some time absent from the theatre, but is said to have been re-engaged there by M. Basset.

## GRIGNON.

A bass singer, who commenced his career at the *banlieue* theatres under the name of Honoré. He subsequently visited Bordeaux, and in 1830, after a *début* at the Académie Royale, went to Rouen, where he remained until 1836, in which year he was engaged at the Opéra Comique.

Grignon is an intelligent and humorous actor, and only wants a good voice to be a good singer.

## HENRI (ACHILLE DESHAYES).

At six years old, Henri was one of the choristers of St. Eustache, and sang solos to the organ. He afterwards received some instruction at the Lycée Napoléon; but, on the death of his father, his mother was unable from want of funds to meet the expenses of his education, and he was apprenticed to a jeweller of the name of Paris. There he sang as he worked, to the great delight of his comrades, by whom he was christened *le Ponchard de l'atelier*; and every Sunday evening he was sure to be found in the *queue* forming before the doors of the Opéra Comique, which had already become his favourite theatre.

M. Paris was for some time unaware of the musical taste of his apprentice; but happening one day by the merest chance to hear him sing, he procured him an admission to the Conservatoire, where Henri

received a salary of fifty francs a-month. He had then a tenor voice, which in six months became baryton, and in another half year bass.

So far all was satisfactory, but, after one of the half-yearly examinations, the committee decided that Henri was only fit for a chorist, and that his salary should be withdrawn from him. This compelled him to try the stage as a last resource, and he was fortunate enough in March, 1822, to obtain an engagement of 800 francs a-year at the Opéra Comique. Up to 1825 he was only a *doublure*, the first original part given him being a very inferior one in Auber's *Macon*, which, however, he sang so well that Talma, who was present at the rehearsal, said to him: "Young man, whoever can sing with such feeling the few notes you have just sung may aspire to success in the most difficult parts." A word of Talma had then the same effect on a young actor as one from Napoleon had on a conscript: it was never forgotten.

Soon after, the subject of our notice played *Gaweston* in *la Dame Blanche*, by Boïeldieu, on whose death five years later one of the corners of the pall was held by Henri, who pronounced an eulogium over the composer's grave. Since then he has created more than two hundred original parts, his greatest successes, perhaps, having been obtained in the productions of Adolphe Adam.

Henri, in addition to being an excellent actor, is a kind-hearted and amiable man, and is deservedly respected by all who know him. He is one of the most active members of the Dramatic Artists' Association, and has ever been the first to promote the interests of that admirably organized society.

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#### HERMANN-LÉON.

This excellent *basso*, whose real name is Léonard Hermann, was born at Lyons, July 3, 1814. After studying in the Conservatoire, he made a successful *début* at Versailles, and subsequently sang at Liège, Havre, and Brussels, in which latter city he became extremely popular. He first appeared at the Opéra Comique July 15, 1844, in *les Quatre Fils*

*Aymon.* He has not only a fine sonorous voice, but his style of singing is spirited and effective; he is also an amusing actor, among his best parts being *Caffarini in la Barcarolle*, and *le Capitaine Roland in les Mousquetaires de la Reine*.

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JOURDAN.

A young and promising tenor from the Conservatoire, whose *début* took place June 29, 1846, as *Azor in Zémire et Azor*.

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MOCKER.

Ernest Mocker was born at Lyons, June 16, 1811. He was intended for the church, and was sent to study sacred music in Paris, where he became one of Chorun's pupils; among his associates being Duprez, and Monpou, the composer. Once in the capital, Mocker soon lost all taste for the clerical profession, and we find him in 1828 playing the kettle drum in the orchestra of the Académie Royale. He soon (like Martin, who began by being a violinist at the Théâtre Feydeau) resolved on quitting the orchestra for the stage, and August 13, 1830, made his first appearance at the Opéra Comique in *la Fête du Village voisin*, and was instantly engaged. He had then a baryton voice, which in a few years became tenor. Unluckily for Mocker, the manager of the Opéra Comique was soon after on the point of bankruptcy, and this disagreeable news was announced to the performers in a highly original manner.

They were all sitting one evening after the performance in the manager's room, anxiously waiting to hear when they were likely to receive the salaries due to them. Suddenly the door opened, and in bounced the manager, dressed *en Pierrot* (the carnival was then at its height). "My good friends," said he with a most amiable smile, "I come to tell you that I cannot pay you a *sou*; my bankruptcy will be announced to-morrow. Excuse me if I do not enter into fuller details; you see

my costume, I am expected at the masked ball." And out he went with a merry-andrewish caper, leaving the company to digest his communication as they best might.

Mocker then successively visited Havre, the Hague, and Toulouse, in which last city he remained five years, it being during his stay there that his voice became tenor. Levasseur and M<sup>re</sup> Dorus-Gras came to sing at Toulouse, and, struck with his talent, recommended him on their return to Paris to M. Crosnier, then manager of the Opéra Comique, by whom he was engaged from June 14, 1839, and made his *rentrée* in *Polichinelle*. He has since that time gradually worked his way up to his present position, and has created parts in most of the operas produced within the last few years, and especially in *Mina, Cagliostro*, and *les Mousquetaires de la Reine*. On the revival of *le Déserteur* he greatly increased his reputation by his admirable performance of *Montaniel*.

Mocker is, after Roger, the best tenor of the Opéra Comique : his voice is extremely fresh and agreeable, and he sings with remarkable taste. One of his chief merits both as a vocalist and as a comedian is his perfect freedom from exaggeration : he neither thinks it necessary to strain his voice nor to over-act in order to produce effect, and it is on that very account that both his singing and acting are the more effective, because they are the more natural.

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#### MONTAUBRY.

A young but indifferent tenor whose *début* at the Opéra Comique took place September 23, 1846, as *Daniel* in *le Châlet*.

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#### MOREAU-SAINTI.

Moreau-Sainti was formerly a pupil of the Conservatoire, and has sung as leading tenor in most of the principal towns of France, such as

Lyon, Rouen, Bordeaux, etc. In 1829, he performed in *les Deux Nuits* at the Opéra Comique, and on the closing of that theatre in 1831 made a professional tour through the South of France. In 1836 he returned to the Opéra Comique, and has since that period played in *le Domino Noir*, *l'Ambassadrice*, and other successful operas.

Moreau-Sainti is a tall and gentlemanly-looking man, and an agreeable actor: as a singer he is respectable, but nothing more. He has established classes for lyric declamation, which are well attended.

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#### PALIANTI.

Doubly useful to the management, both as *régiſſeur* and third-rate singer. Paliani is of Spanish origin, and was born at Cadix, September 9, 1810.

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#### RICQUIER.

Achille Ricquier, almost all of whose family either are or have been on the stage, made his first public essay at Bordeaux towards the end of 1815. Two years after he became acting manager of the Royal theatres at the Hague and Amsterdam, and subsequently coming to France, played for ten years at Lille. His *début* at the Opéra Comique took place May 5, 1835, in *Une Heure de Ménage*, and was followed by an engagement.

Ricquier is a lively and agreeable actor, but no singer: we question indeed if he ever had a voice, for assuredly there are no traces of it observable at the present day. He can, however, afford to do without it better than many of his comrades, who can neither act nor sing (1).

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(1) As *Lucrèce* in *le Coef de Malabar* he is extremely amusing.



## ROGER.

This charming tenor, who is a grandson of Corse, the celebrated manager of the Ambigu Comique, was born December 17, 1815, and was originally intended for the bar. However, when sent to the Ecole de Droit to learn the rudiments of his profession, he preferred taking parts in vaudevilles at the Salle Chantierine to copying deeds and studying law books. His guardian, wishing to cure him of this dramatic ardour, sent him to a notary's office at Argentan, thinking that in so small a place he would have little opportunity of indulging in his favourite pursuit. He was mistaken, for no sooner had Roger arrived at Argentan than he began to organize an amateur company, of which he constituted himself at once manager, principal performer, and head machinist. Half the town caught the infection; numbers of young men and young girls begged to be admitted into the *troupe*, and the notary's office became at length little better than a manager's private room. The worthy lawyer, tired at last of seeing his clerk's desk covered with vaudevilles, and of reading whole scenes and couplets inserted in the deeds which he had given him to copy, begged Roger's guardian to send him elsewhere.

Montargis was the next place fixed upon for the exile of the young enthusiast, but there also, notwithstanding the care with which he was watched, he contrived to get up a new company, and one fine day the inhabitants were informed by bills stuck up on every wall that on the following evening an amateur performance would be given. The house was crowded, and every one applauded, Roger's master not excepted; he however dismissed our hero after the performance, thinking doubtless that so good an actor would in all probability make but an indifferent lawyer.

Finding every attempt to combat his ward's *penchant* for the stage useless, Roger's guardian no longer opposed his wishes, but allowed him to come to Paris. He soon entered the Conservatoire, and after one year's study gained the first prizes for singing and lyric declamation; the assurance of one of his professors, M. Morin, that he had an excellent voice inducing him to give up the idea he had previously

conceived of making his *début* at the Théâtre Français, in order to devote himself wholly to music.

At length, February 16, 1838, he appeared at the Opéra Comique under the most brilliant auspices as *Georges in l'Eclair*, and so successful was this first essay that it procured him an immediate engagement, which on its completion the manager was but too happy to renew. Young and handsome, endowed with a fresh and melodious voice and a rare intelligence, Roger had everything in his favour: while yet a *débutant*, he had already made rapid advances in public estimation, and every successive creation only tended to increase his popularity. To enumerate all the operas in which he has sung would be a long and needless task; we shall content ourselves with citing *le Domino Noir*, *la Part du Diable*, *la Sirène*, and *les Mousquetaires de la Reine*, as being among his happiest efforts.

Roger is without exception the first French tenor now on the stage; the Académie Royale, where, had the interest of the public been consulted, he would have been long since engaged, possessing no singer of such superior and varied merit (1). His voice is clear, musical, and *sympatico*, and of an extreme purity; his method is excellent, and he sings with great expression and feeling.

He is, moreover, an admirable actor, as well in serious as in comic opera.

#### SAINTE-FOY.

A native of Vitry-le-Français, and a pupil of the Conservatoire. He has been attached to the Opéra Comique since 1840, and is an useful member of the company, not so much on account of his singing, which is very indifferent, as of his acting, which, especially in such parts as *Dandini* in *Cendrillon*, is very droll.

(1) About a year ago, Roger sang *Edgar* in *Lucie de Lammermoor*, at the Académie Royale, for the benefit of Massol, on which occasion he was pronounced to be, after *Marin*, the best representative of that very difficult character now on the stage.

## VICTOR.

As near as possible on a par with Garcin.

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BERTHE (M<sup>lle</sup>).

A very promising and nice-looking young singer, with a sweet soprano voice, who made her first appearance at the Opéra Comique September 17, 1846, as *Nicette* in *le Pré aux Clercs*.

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BLANCHARD (M<sup>me</sup>).

M<sup>me</sup> Frosine Blanchard, since the much-to-be-regretted retirement of M<sup>me</sup> Boulanger (1), has monopolized the old women's parts. M<sup>me</sup> Boulanger was once an excellent singer, and always an admirable actress ; we hope some day to be able to say as much of M<sup>me</sup> Blanchard.

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CASIMIR (M<sup>me</sup> ALFRONSINE).

Born in Paris, April 27, 1801. When quite a child she entered the Conservatoire, and at the age of fifteen made a rather unsuccessful *début* at the Opéra Comique in *Jeannot et Colin*. She subsequently acquired some reputation by her singing in *Zampa*, and more particularly in *le Pré aux Clercs*, *Isabelle* in which opera is indisputably her finest creation.

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(1) Her farewell benefit, after more than thirty years' service, took place at the Opéra Comique early in the present year. M. Ernest Boulanger, the composer of *le Diable à l'Ecole*, is a son of this highly talented artist.

DARCIER (M<sup>lle</sup> CÉLESTINE).

A charming young actress and pleasing singer, who, after completing her studies at the Conservatoire, appeared at the Opéra Comique March 21, 1840, in *la Moutille*. Her reception was deservedly flattering, and she speedily became one of the most popular vocalists of the theatre. She is a delightful *Zerlina* in *Fra Diavolo*, and a most *piquante Cendrillon*, nor is she seen to less advantage in *le Maçon*. M<sup>lle</sup> Darcier's voice is sweet, though not very strong, and she sings with considerable taste and brilliancy of execution. Her figure is elegant and her demeanour lady-like, and there is a winning fascination in her manner which not unfrequently reminds us of that bewitching siren, Anna Thillon (1).

DELILLE (M<sup>lle</sup>).

We were present at the *début* of M<sup>lle</sup> Octavie Morize (we believe Delille to be merely a *nom de théâtre*) as *Gina* in *la Barcarolle*, April 22, 1845; she has a good *mezzo soprano* voice, by no means deficient either in extent or in power, and tolerably sweet, excepting some of the upper notes, which are rather shrill. She would be a very pleasing singer, were it not for the tremulous shaking of her voice, a defect excusable in a *duègne*, but unpardonable in a *jeune première*. Her acting betrays the usual awkwardness of a *débutante*, which will probably disappear when she has acquired more stage experience. She has recently sung in *les Dianthus de la Couronne* and *la Dame Blanche*: in the former of these operas she is far inferior to her lovely predecessor, M<sup>me</sup> Anna Thillon; but in the latter, not having so dangerous a *souvenir* to contend against, she has more confidence in her own powers, and is consequently more successful.

M<sup>lle</sup> Delille can neither be called pretty nor plain, but her countenance is decidedly prepossessing, though wholly deficient in expression and flexibility.

1. As a singer of couplets, M<sup>lle</sup> Darcier has no rival at the Opéra Comique.

DUVAL (M<sup>lle</sup>).

M<sup>lle</sup> Artémise Duval has a pretty little face and a pretty little voice, and would, we have no doubt, be a charming singer in a concert or a private room. In a theatre, a certain degree of physical strength is required in order to outsing an orchestra, and this indispensable quality, unhappily for herself and for the public, M<sup>lle</sup> Duval does not possess.

FÉLIX (M<sup>me</sup>).

M<sup>lle</sup> Léontine Melotte, previous to her marriage with Félix, the clever Vaudeville actor, began her operatic career at Rouen, and was subsequently engaged at the Renaissance, but never appeared there owing to the sudden closing of that theatre. She sang for the first time at the Opéra Comique May 19, 1850, in *le Pré aux Clercs*, and was very favourably received. M<sup>me</sup> Félix is a dark-haired beauty, with a good figure and lady-like manners : she has an agreeable but not very powerful voice, and sings sweetly and with considerable taste (1).

LAVOYE (M<sup>lle</sup> ANNE-BENOÎTE-LOUISE).

M<sup>lle</sup> Lavoye, the *prima donna* of the Opéra Comique, is a native of Dunkirk ; her father was formerly in the *garde royale*. Her taste for music appears to have manifested itself at a very early age, for we have heard M. Lavoye say that on his placing her, when scarcely eighteen months old, upon a table, and making her dance to his singing, her little feet kept time to the tune with the most perfect accuracy. At eight years of age she had entirely mastered the difficulties of *sol fa*, and was then instructed by her father in instrumental music : her progress

(1) M<sup>me</sup> Félix is a pupil of Bardonnet.

was so rapid that in another year she was able to accompany singers at a concert.

When little more than ten years old, she was admitted into the Conservatoire at Lille, and had not been there long before she carried away several important prizes, excelling most of her competitors as well in vocal as in instrumental music. Shortly after, accompanying her father to Paris, she became a pupil of Zimmermann, the pianist, and subsequently obtained, through the influence of M<sup>re</sup> Damoreau, and without any preliminary examination, an admission to the Conservatoire. There her studies were for a time interrupted by a severe illness, which compelled her to quit Paris for Dunkirk, where she passed nearly a year : on her return she obtained a prize for lyric declamation at a public examination of the pupils of the Conservatoire, and was also offered by M. Crosnier, who was present on the occasion, an engagement at the Opéra Comique. This she accepted, and made so brilliant a *début* at that theatre April 1, 1843, in Auber's opera of *l'Ambassadrice*, as to induce the same composer to entrust to her the principal character in *la Sirène*. His opinion of her merits was confirmed by the public, the success of the vocalist being fully equal to that of the opera (1).

M<sup>re</sup> Lavoye's voice comprises two octaves and a half, and is more remarkable for sweetness and flexibility than for power; like M<sup>re</sup> Nau, she is rather deficient in animation, but in other respects is an intelligent and agreeable actress. She is blonde, and the *rougeur* of her face is German rather than French : she cannot be called pretty, but the expression of her countenance is most amiable and pleasing, and her manners are unaffected and lady-like (2).

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#### LAVOYE (M<sup>re</sup> MARIE).

Younger sister of the preceding. After having gained several prizes at the Conservatoire, M<sup>re</sup> Marie Lavoye made a highly successful *début*

1) *Athenais de Solanges*, in *les Mousquetaires de la Reine*, is one of M<sup>re</sup> Lavoye's best creations.

(2) If we mistake not, M<sup>re</sup> Lavoye's salary amounts to 18,000 francs a-year.

at the Opéra Comique March 11, 1846, as *Cendrillon* in Nicolo's opera of that name, and has since created parts in *le Caquet du Couvent*, and *Sultana*.

She is blonde like her sister, with pretty eyes and a clear fresh complexion, which has obtained for her the *sobriquet* of "rose-bud." Her voice is remarkably sweet, and she both sings and acts gracefully and agreeably.

#### LEMERCIER (M<sup>lle</sup>).

A pupil of the Conservatoire, gifted with a sweet and flexible voice, whose first appearance at the Opéra Comique took place June 29, 1846, as *Zémire* in *Zémire et Azor*.

M<sup>lle</sup> Lemer cier is a younger sister of M<sup>lle</sup> Betty (or Beaussire) lately a member of the Académie Royale (1); but she is far from possessing the lady-like and graceful manners of that very agreeable singer and pretty woman.

#### MARTIN (M<sup>me</sup>).

M<sup>lle</sup> Joséphine Charlet (now M<sup>me</sup> Martin), after a brief sojourn at this theatre, was engaged at the Variétés by M. Nestor Roqueplan, ever on the look out for beauty, but reappeared at the Opéra Comique in July, 1845, as *Betty* in *le Châlet*.

M<sup>me</sup> Martin is a pretty woman and an agreeable singer, and as such will be always welcome wherever she goes.

(1) M<sup>lle</sup> Aurélie Betty made her first *début* at the Académie Royale in the spring of 1843, as *Valentine* in *les Huguenots*. She has fine eyes and a pleasing countenance, and sings with taste and correctness.

POTIER (M<sup>me</sup>).

M<sup>me</sup> Henri Potier, wife of the composer of *le Caquet du Couvent*, has light hair and pretty eyes, and sings with taste.

PRÉVOST (M<sup>lle</sup>).

The *début* of M<sup>lle</sup> Zoé Prévost at the Opéra Comique took place February 17, 1821, and the character selected for the occasion was *Lucette* in *la Fausse Magie*. At that time, it was the fashion to substitute for the old operas, the music and words of which were equally charming, scientific productions where the music was as utterly deficient in melody as the *libretto* was in common sense. In order to represent these effectively, it was by no means necessary that the singers should be able to *act*: on the contrary, provided that the *sautes* and *roundes* were executed with sufficient brilliancy, each of the performers was at liberty to stand, sit, or walk as mechanically as if he or she were a well-drilled automaton.

The fresh sweet voice, the simple method, and the natural and expressive acting of M<sup>lle</sup> Prévost were therefore doubly attractive from their novelty to the *habitués*, and the reception of the young vocalist was most enthusiastic. It was not, however, till 1826, that the production of Herold's *Marie* afforded her an opportunity of displaying her talent to its utmost advantage; the exquisite grace and sensibility with which she invested the character of the heroine, and the simple truth of her acting, occasioned it to be said of her,

"Que toujours la nature  
Embellit la beauté."

From this time M<sup>lle</sup> Prévost mainly contributed to the success of almost every piece brought out during her stay at the theatre, which she was induced to quit, partly owing to some differences with the management, and partly to the very tempting offers made her by one of the directors at Brussels. She was absent three years, but on her return was received with (if possible) greater favour than before: she



then created *Modéline* in *le Postillon*, and *Effie* in *le Brasseur de Preston*.

M<sup>lle</sup> Prévost is beyond all comparison the best actress at the Opéra Comique; in *buffo* parts we have seldom seen her equal, and, though so many years have elapsed since her *début*, she still retains much of the grace and *naïveté* of her youth. A decided tendency to *embon-point* has compelled her to give up many of her creations, but she still plays and with as much *verve* as ever her original character of *Modéline* in *le Postillon*. Her voice is even now remarkable for its flexibility; and though a few sharp notes will occasionally mar the effect of a passage, yet such is her musical skill and tact, that the inroads of time are but rarely perceptible. It is a real treat to hear her and Chollet sing together in *le Tableau parlant*, *le Maître de Chapelle*, and some of the good old operas: the vigour and spirit of their acting contrast as agreeably with the puppet-like stiffness of too many of their comrades, as do the fresh and lively melodies of Grétry and his contemporaries with the tasteless and unmeaning *routades* in fashion at the present day.

#### RÉVILLY (M<sup>lle</sup>).

M<sup>lle</sup> Hermance Révilly, daughter of an actor of the Grand Theatre at Lyons, was born in that city, October 5, 1823. She was encouraged to study music by Nourrit, and in 1838, having lost her father, obtained admittance to the Conservatoire, where she attended Ponchard's class for two years. She first appeared at the Opéra Comique December 10, 1840, as *Marie* in *la Fille du Régiment*; and her success, owing to the agreeable freshness of her voice and the graceful piquancy of her acting, was decisive.

M<sup>lle</sup> Révilly, without possessing an organ remarkable either for power or flexibility, is nevertheless a pleasing singer and lady-like actress: her *tenue* is irreproachable, and she is an excellent representative of *la grande dame*. The opera of *Marie* has been lately revived for her, but though she personates the heroine with grace and simplicity

her voice is unequal to the musical difficulties of the part. We like her better as *Clélia* in *la Barcarolle*, and as *Louise* in *le Déserteur*.

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ROUILLET (M<sup>lle</sup>).

A young singer, endowed with very moderate abilities, vocal or dramatic, who first appeared at this theatre in December, 1845, as *Zerlina* in *Fra Diavolo*.

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SAINT-ANGE (M<sup>me</sup>).

First appeared at the Opéra Comique August 14, 1846, as *Marguerite* in *Paul et Virginie*. She has since played the Queen in *le Pré aux Clercs*, but her bearing is not sufficiently dignified for the part.

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SAINT-FOY (M<sup>me</sup>).

A lively actress, but an indifferent singer, her voice being remarkably thick and indistinct.

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The following selection from the very extensive *répertoire* of this theatre merely comprises those pieces, ancient and modern, which are most frequently represented :

Le Déserteur.  
 Fra Diavolo.  
 La Dame Blanche.  
 Jean de Paris.  
 Zampa.  
 Le Châlet.

Le Postillon de Lonjumeau.  
La Sirène.  
Le Domino Noir.  
La Part du Diable.  
Le Pré aux Clercs.  
Richard Cœur-de-Lion.  
Les Diamans de la Couronne.  
Le Maître de Chapelle.  
Joconde.  
Le Nouveau Seigneur.  
L'Ambassadrice.  
Jeannot et Colin.  
Le Panier Fleuri.  
L'Eau Merveilleuse.  
Cendrillon.  
Le Maçon.  
Zémire et Azor.  
Les Mousquetaires de la Reine.

## CHAPTER V.

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### ODÉON (SECOND THÉÂTRE FRANÇAIS).

FAUBOURG SAINT GERMAIN.

*Manager, M. Bocage.*

IN 1782, as has been already mentioned, the King's comedians quitted the theatre of the Tuileries, where they had been performing since 1770, for the Odéon, which opened in that year under the name of the Théâtre Français. This appellation was changed in 1789 to that of Théâtre de la Nation. Two years after the secession of Talma and his comrades from the *troupe*, the production of *Paméla ou la Vertu récompensée* at the Théâtre de la Nation was followed by the immediate closing of the theatre, and by the arrest and imprisonment of the entire company, with the exception of Molé and Dessessarts, both of whom were absent. The crime with which the comedians were charged was the representation of a piece containing aristocratic principles. Some of the captives regained their liberty on condition of joining the company in the Rue Richelieu, but the rest were detained some time longer in confinement.

In 1796, a journal called *le Républicain Français* thus announced the re-opening of this theatre.

"The *ci-devant* Théâtre Français, situated near the Palace of the Executive Directory, is about to be re-opened. The Government has granted a lease of it for thirty years to a company of capitalists, who are bound :

"Firstly. To repair thoroughly the interior of the building.

"Secondly. To collect there the best actors of every kind.

"Thirdly. To form a species of dramatic school or institution.

"Fourthly. To place the theatre at the disposal of the government on all occasions when it may be required for national entertainments, or for the awarding of prizes to men of talent.

"Fifthly. To place in the hands of a government treasurer the remuneration due to those deceased writers whose pieces may be acted. This will form a fund out of which will be paid the pensions granted to aged authors and distinguished actors."

The theatre then took the Greek name of the Odéon. On the death of M<sup>lle</sup> Joly it was closed, and re-opened under the management of a certain Sageret, who was at the same time director of the Théâtre Français in the Rue Richelieu, and of the Feydeau. This triple undertaking was too heavy for a single individual, and, as might be expected, Sageret failed, and the Odéon was once more closed.

In 1799, it re-opened under the direction of a company of old actors, and on March 19 of the same year was burnt to the ground (1).

Rebuilt at a considerable expense, it again opened June 15, 1808, under the name of the Empress's Theatre (*Théâtre de l'Impératrice*), Alexandre Duval being appointed manager. The principal performers were then Armand, Grandville (afterwards of the Théâtre Français), M<sup>lle</sup> Moké-Léger, and M<sup>lle</sup> Motière; and among the dramatists who commenced their literary career at this theatre were Messrs. Dupaty, Rougemont, Dumersan, and Verle.

In 1814, the title of Empress's Theatre was again changed to that of the Odéon, and four years later, March 20, 1818, during the management of Picard, it was again totally destroyed by fire. This, as well as

(1) Nothing was saved except the busts in the foyer, and a statue of Voltaire.

the preceding catastrophe, was supposed to be the act of an incendiary, but the mystery was never cleared up.

It was once more rebuilt by order of Louis XVIII., and a manifesto published at the time declared that "the Odéon, annexed to the Théâtre Français, should hold the rank of a Royal theatre.

"The privilege," says the decree, "shall be granted to a company of actors, who shall manage it at their own risk and expense, and shall be subject to the same conditions as those imposed on the members of the Théâtre Français."

While the theatre was in process of erection, the performers occupied the Salle Favart, and among the most successful novelties produced there was *la Famille Glinet*, a piece for some time attributed, but without foundation, to Louis XVIII. The Odéon re-opened September 30, 1819, and among the company were Joanny, David, Provost, Samson, and M<sup>lle</sup> Brocard: Casimir Delavigne's tragedy of *les Vêpres Siciliennes* was first performed there.

The theatre subsequently forsook tragedy and comedy for opera, under the management of M. Bernard, who made his fortune by the production of *Robin des Bois*. Then came the legitimate drama with Beauvallet and M<sup>me</sup> Albert, and later still, M. Harel, accompanied by M<sup>lle</sup> Georges (1), Lockroy, Bocage, and M<sup>me</sup> Dorval.

(1) The father of this celebrated actress was manager of the Anziens theatre, and she herself was born in that town January 20, 1788. At a very early age she was able, so precocious was her intelligence, to reprimand the *Achille* and *Agamemnon* of the company when they played badly; and her own first appearance on her father's boards took place when she was hardly twelve years old.

M<sup>me</sup> Raucourt, while on a provincial tour, came to Amiens, and, struck with the promising talent displayed by M<sup>me</sup> Georges, gave her some instruction, and it was under the auspices of this renowned actress that our heroine made her *début* at the Théâtre-Français, November 29, 1802, as *Clytemnestre* in *Iphigénie en Aulide*. Her success was decisive with the public generally, but the partisans of M<sup>me</sup> Duchesnois were so numerous that after a long struggle for supremacy between the two rivals, during which M<sup>me</sup> Georges was strenuously supported by the critic Geoffroy, she was overpowered, and one evening, a cabal having been formed against her, was so violently hissed that she fainted, and the performances were stopped. In 1808, M<sup>me</sup> Georges suddenly quitted Paris, first for Vienna, and subsequently for St. Petersburg, in each of which cities she was received with great favour, and in 1812 returned to the Français, but again left it in 1817. After a trip to London in company with Talma, she made a very successful *début* at the Odéon, October 1, 1821, and from that period she was for several years engaged by turns in London and at the Odéon, until she quitted tragedy for drama, the Second Théâtre Français for the Porte Saint Martin. There she created *Marguerite de Bourgogne* in *la Tour de Nesle*, *Lucrèce Borgia*, and *Marie Tudor*. Some six or seven years ago M<sup>me</sup> Georges, at the head of a fragile and dramatic company, explored Italy and Russia, and penetrated as

Since 1832, the Odéon has been occupied by directors and performers of every kind, from Castelli's little actors to the company of the Théâtre Français, who, during M. Vedel's management of the two theatres, went from the Rue Richelieu to the Odéon, and *vice versa*. After the destruction by fire of the Salle Favart, in 1838, the Italian Opera was transferred to the Odéon, where it remained until the period of its removal to the Salle Ventadour.

In 1842, the Second Théâtre Français was opened by a society of actors, among whom were the two sons of Monrose, Louis, and Eugène, Mirecour, now of the Théâtre Français, and M. d'Epagny, a dramatic author. These were succeeded by M. Lireux, a *journaliste*, whose management, notwithstanding a subsidy of 60,000 francs, now for the first time granted to the Odéon by the government, was neither profitable to himself nor to the public. Of all the pieces produced during the period of his administration, three alone have retained possession of the stage, namely, *Lucrèce*, by Ponsard, *la Ciguë*, a charming comedy, by Emile Augier, and *la Main droite et la main gauche*, by Léon Gozlan. Others of inferior merit, such as *la Comtesse d'Attemberg*, *Jane Grey*, and *les Pharaons*, obtained a temporary success, but are now almost forgotten. Even the famous *Antigone*, though aided by Mendelssohn's music and a *mise en scène* after the fashion of the ancient Greeks, excited but little curiosity, nor did the pretended discovery of a lost comedy of Molière, *le Docteur Amoureux*, produce any beneficial effect on the receipts.

Under the management of M. Lireux, the Odéon became a refuge for those authors whose pieces were refused everywhere else; nay, it is said that many of them actually *paid* for the production of such trash as would have disgraced the lowest Boulevard theatre. The few really good actors belonging to the company were either condemned to waste their talents on every *ours* (1) that the director chose to put into re-

far as the Crimes. She afterwards returned to the Odéon, and is at the present moment engaged in a provincial tour.

This distinguished actress, when in the height of her beauty, was thus described: "Her eye-brows are finely arched, her eyes are brilliant and animated, her nose is straight and thin, and her forehead broad and tall, but not high. Her arms, though large, are white, and her hands small; as to her profile, it is perfectly Grecian."

(1) An *ours* is the technical term for a piece which has been offered to half the theatres in Paris successively, and has been rejected by all.

hearsal, or, if they refused, were made to play every evening in the first piece, or, in other words, before empty benches. In short, the Second Théâtre Français had fallen so low in public estimation, that even the united merits of M<sup>lle</sup> Georges, M<sup>lle</sup> Maxime (1), and Bocage, failed to assemble more than a few listless stragglers within its walls. It was impossible that this state of things could last, and in the spring of 1845, finding all attempts to extricate himself from hourly increasing difficulties vain, M. Lireux resigned, and the Odéon closed. No sooner was his resignation accepted, than a number of candidates made application for the vacant privilege, which, after much deliberation on the part of government, was eventually granted to M. Bocage, under whose management the theatre re-opened November 15, 1845, with a prologue by Théophile Gautier, Rotrou's revived tragedy of *Saint Genest*, and a *petite* comedy entitled *Un Bourgeois de Rome*.

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## THE COMPANY.

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(Many of the performers at this theatre being mere beginners, we shall only mention some of the most promising.)

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### BLAISOT.

A young comic actor of great promise, whose *début* at the Odéon took place December 3, 1845, as *l'Intimé* in *les Plaidiers*.

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(1) M<sup>lle</sup> Maxime was born June 18, 1815, during the battle of Waterloo, in a small farm house near Beaugé, in the Département of Maine and Loire. Losing her parents at a very early age, she was confided to the care of her grandmother, a pious and estimable woman, and received a good education, thanks to the patronage of the Comte de —, who allowed her to profit by the lessons of the different masters engaged to instruct his children. In 1826, M<sup>lle</sup> Maxime went to Paris at the request of one of her female relations, a silk-mercer, who offered her a home; and four years later, having become a pupil of Dumilâtre,



## BOCAGE.

This celebrated *artiste* (whose real name is Pierre Martinien Tousez) is a native of Rouen : his father, once proprietor of a manufactory in that city, was reduced by a series of reverses to become foreman in a similar establishment in Paris. His two eldest sons accompanied him to the capital, but the mother and her youngest boy, Pierre, remained at Rouen, where our hero contrived to earn a miserable pittance of three francs a-week by carding wool. This occupation, however, was no more to his taste than were the privations he was daily forced to endure, and at last, after having barely kept body and soul together by incessant toil for several years, he determined to quit Rouen, and seek his fortune in Paris. On his arrival, he was offered by one of his brothers, at that time a grocer in the capital, a place as assistant in his shop, but had he even been inclined to accept the proposal, the recollection of an adventure which had happened to him *en route* would have prevented his doing so.

At a roadside inn he had met with a young man who, like him, was tired of Rouen, but, unlike him, was not in need of bettering his condition, having not only a good supply of money, but a comfortable carriage. The rich and the poor traveller made acquaintance at the inn-door.

"Where are you going!" asked the former rather cavalierly.

"To Paris."

"So am I. What will you do there?"

then of the Théâtre Français, she made her first *début* at the Odéon with moderate success. During the next six years she studied much and played little, and it was not until 1838 that she re-appeared at the Odéon. At length, June 27, 1841, she made a brilliant *début* at the Français as Phèdre, a character performed by her nine times successively, and was eventually engaged for one year. During this period she played *Elizabeth* to Rachel's *Maria Stuart* very effectively, and was cast the part of Guinevere in *les Burgraves*, but was compelled by Victor Hugo (the author) to resign it to M<sup>lle</sup> Mélingue, after she had rehearsed it thirty-two times. She then quitted the Français for the Odéon, where she remained until the close of M. Lireux's management, playing *Jeune d'Arc à Rouen*, *Luce*, etc., with great and deserved success.

M<sup>lle</sup> Maxime's distinctive qualities are force, passion, and energy : she stands entirely apart from the conventional school, nor is there the slightest shadow of monotony or of lameness in her acting. Whatever she says, she feels, and makes others feel also ; and, though her personations may be wanting to classic elegance, they are not on that account the less life-like or the less natural.

" I don't know."

" Will you come with me? I am going to make money, and turn actor. "

The coachman, cracking his whip, cut short the conversation.

Away went the carriage, and poor Pierre followed slowly on foot, beguiling his way by repeating every sentence he had picked up at the Rouen theatre, for the words he had just heard had made a lasting impression on him, and he finally reached Paris, resolved to turn actor also.

Finding his dislike to retail groceries invincible, his brother placed him, without asking his leave, in a lawyer's office. He was, however, much too honest and independent to be a good clerk, and as his master promised to pay his salary and never did, he left him to accept a situation in the war office. There, as it chanced, many of his new comrades were as fond of the theatre as he was himself, and they talked of *cou-lisses*, new pieces, and performers, until he could bear it no longer, and had his name inscribed on the books of the Conservatoire for examination. But, in order to appear before the committee, a good suit of clothes was indispensable. He implored his brother to aid him, telling him that he intended to *make money and turn actor*; the grocer, however, flew into a violent passion, and forbade him his house. The poor youth wandered about in despair, and even entertained the idea of committing suicide: he was, indeed, in the act of plunging into the Seine, when a friendly hand rescued him. The kind Samaritan was no other than his second brother, who not only hindered him from carrying his rash purpose into execution, but supplied him with a decent coat: this timely aid enabled him to present himself before the Conservatoire, where he found several other candidates awaiting the summons of their judges. His turn came at last, and after declaiming the passage prescribed to him with all the energy in his power, he had the mortification of finding that he was unanimously rejected by the committee, composed of two professors of vocal and three of instrumental music, and two dancing-masters.

The next year was a trying one: he continued to live, or rather to exist, by copying deeds for attorneys, and kept his dramatic visions closely pent up in his own breast. One day, he fell in with his old fellow-

traveller, but how changed! Instead of the frisky horses and fashionable dress, which had formerly excited the envy of the poor artisan, he was now on foot, meanly clad, and endeavouring to sell *chaines de sûreté* and other ornaments on the Pont des Arts (1).

"Ah! there you are!" exclaimed Pierre, rather saucily in his turn. They fell into conversation, and dined together. After hearing the adventure of his companion, the *ci-devant* wealthy youth blamed him for having had recourse to the Conservatoire, and took him to a practical school in the Rue de Lancry, directed by some actors of the Ambigu Comique, where he himself was then occasionally studying. It required little persuasion to induce our hero to become an assiduous frequenter of this school, and during his attendance there he acquired the rudiments of his dramatic education; some months after the two friends separated, the ex-chain vendor to accept an engagement as *utility*, and his less fortunate comrade to visit the provinces, with the intention of offering his services to the first company of Thespians he might fall in with. We find him shortly after at Nancy, nearly causing the death of M. Harel (2), who was at that time little better than a *directeur ambulant* or strolling manager, and whose offer of an engagement the young aspirant to dramatic honours had accepted, on condition that he should never be called upon to sing.

One evening, he was announced to appear as *Almaviva* in *le Barbier de Séville*, it having been previously arranged that the *romance* commencing "*Vous l'ordonnez, je me ferai connaître*," should be sung by another actor behind the scenes. The critical moment arrived, and the Count, guitar in hand, prepared to strike the chords: in vain, however, the orchestra played the symphony twice over, no responsive sound was heard from the *coulistes*, and at length the public, losing patience, commenced a most unmusical concert of hisses and hooting. This untoward *dénouement* so incensed Almaviva that he rushed off the stage, and meeting Harel, who was himself thunderstruck at the

(1) The usual resort of the vendors of these chains is the Boulevard, where their stock of merchandise is spread out on a little table to tempt the passers-by. Like the thimble-riggers, they have always one or two confederates busily engaged in handling the different articles, and making imaginary purchases, in order to induce others to follow their example.

(2) Subsequently lessee of the Odéon and of the Porte Saint Martin.

unexpected absence of the substitute, seized him by the throat, and would most assuredly have throttled him, had he not been held back by the united efforts of Rosina and the *commissaire de police*.

In 1823, Pierre Tousez made his *début* at the Odéon under the assumed name of Bocage, but soon quitted that theatre for the Français, after which he played at each by turns, his first important creation being *l'Homme du Monde*, which caused some sensation, and attracted towards him the notice of the press. But one success does not make an actor's reputation, and, unluckily for him, the Odéon closed soon after the production of the piece. He applied to several managers, but the Second Théâtre Français being then considered from its remote situation as almost a provincial theatre, he could get nothing better than an engagement without salary at the Galté. His acting, however, in *la Prison de Newgate* soon procured him a fresh engagement of 2,500 francs a-year. He was subsequently asked by the authors of an imitation of the *Merchant of Venice* to read their piece to the company of the Porte Saint Martin, and in the event of its acceptance to undertake the part of *Shylock*: both play and actor were enthusiastically received, and M. Crosnier, then manager of that theatre, engaged Bocage at a salary of from 6,000 to 10,000 francs. It was during his stay at the Porte Saint Martin that he created his two finest parts, *Buridan* in *la Tour de Nesle*, and *Antony* in Dumas's piece of that name: his performance of the latter character created a sensation which few actors of the present day are capable of exciting. Quitting at length the scene of his early triumphs, Bocage transferred his valuable talents to the Gymnase, and subsequently to the Odéon, where he greatly contributed to the success of *Lucrece*, and of *la Main Droite et la Main Gauche*, the best tragedy and the best drama produced at that theatre during the management of M. Lireux. He is now before the public in a new character, that of lessee of the Odéon, of which theatre he himself is the main support.

Bocage is essentially an actor of drama, not of tragedy: he excels in depicting the passions of the human heart, unfettered by the laws and traditions of the conventional school. He is one of those few *artistes* who do not think it necessary, because they may have once produced effect by a particular gesture or look, to repeat it a second time: his acting is not dictated by mechanical habit, but by inspiration alone,

and is on that very account more impressive as well as more natural. We may easily imagine, therefore, how little to his taste must have been his position at the Théâtre Français : while rehearsing there *le Misanthrope* and *Nicomède* he was perpetually harassed by the advice and opinions of the lovers of the old school. By them every part in the *répertoire* was defined in a particular manner; to please them, the actor must walk, sit, and raise his hand exactly as his predecessors had done before him. Bocage could not do this; with all his admiration for Talma, he wished to play the *chefs-d'œuvre* of Corneille, Molière, and Racine after his own idea, but was overruled. Talma's gestures and manner of saying every line were incessantly repeated to him, and he saw that to satisfy his hearers he must either be a copy of Talma, or nothing. Had he yielded, had he consented to sacrifice his own judgment to that of others, France would have gained an automaton, and lost an actor. Luckily the drama came to his aid; he became to the modern stage what Talma had been to the ancient, bearing, however, as little resemblance to his predecessor as the two schools of acting, whose respective disciples they were, did to each other.

It is by no means difficult on reflection to account for the temporary decline of classical tragedy, and the consequent triumph of what is generally called the *romantic school*, subsequent to the death of Talma. The genius of that celebrated actor had invested tragedy with a *prestige* which none of his successors were capable of continuing. When he died, there remained only the frame-work of his talent, appreciated as before in the closet, but insufficient (owing to the inferiority of its interpreters) on the stage. Tragedy then gave way to drama. "Bocage, thin, tall, and pale," says M. Félix Pyat, "could not have replaced Talma, but perhaps Talma would have looked too healthy in *Anony*; Bocage could afford to do without personal advantages; he had new resources to meet the wants of the new school." The same writer, in an admirable paper published some years ago in the *Revue de Paris*, concludes an eloquent eulogium of the subject of our notice by the following honourable testimony to his private worth. "I have spoken of the actor, I will now speak of the man. If the one has a right to our admiration, the other has a claim on our esteem. I have always found Bocage as much a slave to his word as a Mahometan, true and devoted to his

friends, ready and willing to serve all. Having begun life by suffering, he knows what it is to suffer. Therefore, as far as he can, is he always disposed to help with his purse, his advice, his credit, young actors, even those who may one day be his own rivals. Loyalty and generosity are the eminent virtues of his character. He alone would certainly have destroyed the prejudice so long unfavourable to actors, if that prejudice still existed " (1).

Bocage does not, like many of his comrades, look upon his *métier* as a hard and ungrateful one, more or less endurable in proportion to its being more or less lucrative; on the contrary, he glories in the name of actor, and is extremely sensitive to any slight cast upon his profession, as the following anecdote will show. An author, who had given him a part in a new piece, insisted that, when they met, Bocage, as being only an *actor*, should take off his hat first to him, who, as an *author*, was entitled to this mark of respect. The actor flatly refused, and after many words had passed on both sides, he was desired by the author to return the part. Bocage instantly gave it back, saying, with a very low bow: "When I accepted this part, I said, so much the worse for me! now that I give it back to you, I say, so much the worse for you!" (2).

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#### DARCOURT.

Acts the *pères nobles* in tragedy and comedy, including Roman Emperors and Athenian Grandees.

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#### JOURDAIN.

This actor made his first *début* at the Odéon under M. Lireux's

(1) We gladly embrace the present opportunity of expressing our own cordial concurrence in the sentiments quoted above, and most willingly bear testimony to M. Bocage's amiability of manner and real kindness of heart.

(2) Since the opening of the Odéon under his management, Bocage has added to his numerous creations those of *Diogène* in M. Félix Pyat's piece of that name, and the *Duc d'Albuquerque* in *Ehéc et Mat*.

management, in January, 1845, as *le Comte* in *Un Mariage sous Louis XV.* He has a good voice and gentlemanly manners.

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JUST (CLÉMENT).

Played at the Gymnase previous to his engagement at the Odéon, where he sustains the leading youthful characters in tragedy and drama.

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MAUZIN (ALEXANDRE).

A stout jolly-looking comic actor, formerly a member of the Ambigu, who would be very amusing were he not rather inclined to over-act his parts.

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RANDOUX.

Born in Paris, December 15, 1822. After studying under Messrs. Michelot and Samson at the Conservatoire, he became a favourite with the frequenters of the *Banlieue* theatres, and at length made a tolerably successful *début* at the Français, October 10, 1843, as *Curioce* in *les Horaces*. In 1845, after quitting the Théâtre Français, he accompanied M<sup>lle</sup> Rachel in her provincial tour to Strasbourg, Lyons, etc., and on the opening of the Odéon under the present management was engaged there as *jeune premier*.

Randoux is an energetic actor, but his energy frequently borders on rant, and his gestures are both extravagant and ungraceful. We by no means admire his creation of *Alcibiade* in *Diogène*.

BLONVAL (M<sup>lle</sup> CLANISSE).

A most excellent *soubrette*.

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DELVIL (M<sup>me</sup>).

After a moderately successful essay at the Théâtre Français, M<sup>me</sup> Delvil quitted Paris some few years ago for Berlin, and on her return made her *début* at the Vaudeville early in 1844, in *Pierre le Millionnaire*. She afterwards played the heroine in M<sup>me</sup> Ancelot's *Clémence*, and created parts in *le Client*, *les Deux Pertes*, etc. In April, 1846, she, together with her husband (1), seceded from the company, and, in the October following, she made her first appearance at the Odéon as *la Duchesse* in *Échec et Mat*, a character originally sustained by M<sup>lle</sup> Naptal. M<sup>me</sup> Delvil is an agreeable actress, and rather a pretty woman; her eyes are large and fine, and her speaking voice is by no means unmusical, but she is no singer.

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FERNAND (M<sup>lle</sup>).

M<sup>lle</sup> Fernand is a pupil of Samson of the Théâtre Français, and made her first *début* at the Gymnase, July 11, 1844, as *Thérèse* in *Rodolphe*. After creating *Ascanio del Dongo* in *Rebecca* and other parts, she quitted the Boulevard Bonne-Nouvelle for the Odéon, where she appeared in the spring of the present year.

M<sup>lle</sup> Fernand plays with ease and vivacity, and is a most pains-taking and promising actress.

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FITZJAMES (M<sup>lle</sup>).

M<sup>lle</sup> Fitzjames has a fine commanding figure, an expressive though

(1) Delvil's *début* at the Vaudeville took place in the spring of 1844, in *le Papillon Jaune et Bleu*.



not handsome face, and an agreeable voice. She does not want for animation or sensibility, and were her attitudes and gestures a little more classic and graceful, she might be a good tragic actress. As it is, she is seen to greater advantage in drama.

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LÉVÊQUE (M<sup>lle</sup>).

M<sup>lle</sup> Léonie Lévêque made her first *début* at the Français in August, 1845, as *Camille* in *les Horaces*, but was not engaged. She is tall, but her manner is singularly deficient in dignity and grace; she recites correctly, but is utterly destitute of energy and sensibility.

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MOREAU-SAINTI (M<sup>me</sup>).

This lady possesses dramatic talents of a high order, and is seen to especial advantage in *le Fils de la Folle*.

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The few modern pieces worthy of mention in the *répertoire* of the Odéon are the following :

Lucrèce. . . . .	Ponsard.
La Ciguë. . . . .	Émile Augier.
Diogène. . . . .	Félix Pyat.
La Main Droite et la Main	
Gauche. . . . .	Léon Gozlan.
Le Succès. . . . .	Harcl.
Le Vieux Consul. . . . .	Arthur Ponroy.
Le Voyage à Pontoise. . . . .	Alphonse Royer and Gustave Vaëz.
Le Chevalier de Pomponne.	Mary Lafon.
L'Oncle de Normandie. . . . .	Ditto.
Echec et Mat. . . . .	Feuillet and Paul Bocage.

## CHAPTER VI.

### ITALIAN OPERA.

SALLE VENTADOUR.

*Manager, M. Vatel.*

It has been already mentioned that in 1645 a company of singers came to Paris from Italy on the invitation of Cardinal Mazarin, and performed operas in the *Théâtre du Petit-Bourbon*. These, however, soon retraced their steps homewards, and it was not till 1752 that some of their countrymen re-appeared in the French capital on a short professional visit, which was repeated in 1778. In 1789, we find an Italian *troupe* established under the protection of the Comte d'Orléans in the *Salle des Tuileries*, then called *Théâtre de Monsieur*, where they sang in the operas of Sarti, Anfossi, Paisiello, and Cimarosa. They were in their turn forced to quit Paris on the breaking out of the Revolution, but re-appeared in June, 1802, in the *Salle Olympique*, Rue de la Victoire, under the management of M<sup>lle</sup> Montansier. Seven or eight months after, they transferred their performances to the Salle Favart, which had become vacant owing to the union of the two Opéra Comique companies at the Théâtre Feydeau. In the following year, the expenses so far exceeded the receipts that the theatre was closed, and a

subsequent attempt made by a society of *dilettanti* to re-establish the Italian Opera having signally failed, the singers were on the point of re-crossing the Alps, when the government authorized them to occupy the Théâtre Louvois, and gave them Picard, the celebrated author-actor, for manager.

In 1808, they followed him to the Odéon, where the fine voice of M<sup>me</sup> Barilli proved a source of great attraction to the public. She, however, dying in 1813, and Picard being at the same time summoned to manage the French Opera, the Italian singers were once more on the verge of ruin, when M<sup>me</sup> Catalani became directress in 1815, and installed her company in the Salle Favart, where they remained until 1818. They then once more took possession of the Théâtre Louvois, and from that time, notwithstanding their frequent transigrations, first to the Salle Favart, from whence they were driven by the destruction of that theatre by fire in 1838 (1), secondly to the Odéon, and thirdly, in 1841, to the Salle Ventadour, they have enjoyed a most brilliant and prosperous career. Most of the leading Italian *artistes* have at one period or another been members of the *troupe*, M<sup>me</sup> Pasta, Malibran, and Sontag having been succeeded, in addition to the actual company, by Rubini, Tamburini, and M<sup>me</sup> Viardot Garcia.

This theatre, towards the support of which an annual sum of 70,000 francs was formerly contributed by government, no longer ranks among the *théâtres subventionnés*, that allowance having been withdrawn some three or four years ago. It is only open during half the year, from the first of October to the thirty-first of March.

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## THE COMPANY.

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### CELLINI.

An agreeable singer, with a sweet but far from powerful tenor voice.

(1) One of the managers, M. Severini, perished in the flames.

## COLETTI.

A *basso* of great reputation in Italy, whose *début* in Paris is eagerly looked forward to by the *dilettanti*.

## CORELLI.

An efficient second tenor, but a cold and inanimate actor. His voice has neither sufficient extent, strength, nor sweetness, to warrant his attempting any more important part than that of *Pollione* in *Norma*, which few *premiers sujets* will undertake.

## DÉRIVIS.

Son of a celebrated bass singer of the Académie Royale, where he himself, after completing his studies at the Conservatoire, made his first *début* in *le Philtre*. He then boldly undertook Levasseur's difficult part of *Bertram* in *Robert-le-Diable*, and subsequently quitted France for Italy, on his return from whence he was engaged at the Italian Opera, where he appeared on the opening night of the season of 1845 in Verdi's *Nabucco*. He was favourably received, and sang afterwards in *Semiramide*, *Il Proscritto*, and other operas with considerable success.

His voice is a fine bass, extensive and sonorous, but rather wanting in flexibility : he sings with expression, and since his return from Italy has lost much of the stiffness and monotony which formerly characterized his acting. He has, moreover, a good figure, and a handsome and intelligent countenance (1).

(1) Dérivis is not engaged for the ensuing season : his place will be supplied by Coletti. We have, however, thought it more advisable to retain the above notice, which, as well as that of M<sup>lle</sup> Teresa Brambilla, was written before the arrangements for the present year were decided on.

## LABLACHE (LUGI).

This admirable singer is now in his fiftieth year, having been born at Naples in 1796 : his father, Nicholas Lablache, was, we believe, a native of Marseilles, and his mother an Irishwoman. At an early age he obtained admission into the *Conservatorio della Pietà*, where he became a proficient both in vocal and in instrumental music, though the former study was far more congenial to his taste than the latter. His great ambition was to appear on the stage, and many were the attempts made by him to effect this object : the Neapolitan managers, however, being strictly forbidden to engage any pupil of the *Conservatorio* before the completion of his studies, Lablache was forced to resume his *sol fa*, and bear the disappointment as philosophically as he could. His wishes were at length in some measure gratified by the establishment of a theatre in the *Conservatorio* itself, where he, in company with the other pupils, was permitted to sing. But even this did not satisfy his ambition ; the audience, chiefly composed of his own professors and personal friends, were neither sufficiently severe in their criticism nor sufficiently enthusiastic in their applause to please him, and he soon longed more ardently than ever for the moment of emancipation, when his success or failure might be decided by the public voice.

As soon as he was at liberty to do so, Lablache accepted an engagement as *buffo Napolitano* at the Teatro di San Carlino, where his liveliness and humour made him an especial favourite, and subsequently quitted Naples, first for Messina, and afterwards for Palermo, where he made a brilliant *début* as *basso cantante* in an opera of Pavesi. During the five years which he passed at Palermo, Lablache not only made great progress as a singer, but also acquired that stage experience which long practice alone can give. Confident in his own powers, he shortly after signed an engagement with the manager of la Scala, and appeared for the first time before the Milanese public as *Dandini* in *la Cenerentola*. His reception was so enthusiastic as to induce Mercadante to write expressly for the young *basso* a new opera, *Elisa e Claudio*, the success of which was an equal triumph for the composer and the *artiste*.

In 1824, Lablache sang for some time in Vienna, where he displayed all the wonderful resources and versatility of his talent, playing on four successive evenings *Figaro* in *Il Barbieri*, *Assur* in *Semiramide*, *Don Geronimo* in *Il Matrimonio Segreto*, and *Uberto* in Paer's *Agnese*. These different characters, so utterly distinct from each other, were personated by him with such life-like truth and reality as to excite universal admiration. A medal was struck in commemoration of these four consecutive triumphs, representing the portrait of Lablache, with an inscription composed by the Marquis de Gargallo.

In 1829, this celebrated singer made a most successful *début* at the Italian Opera in London, and on November 2, 1830, he experienced an equally brilliant reception in Paris, where Messrs. Robert and Severini, at that time managers of the Salle Favart, had offered him an engagement. The part selected for the occasion was that of *Geronimo* in *Il Matrimonio Segreto*, and never, if we may believe contemporary accounts, was Cimarosa's music listened to with more enthusiasm. The presence of Rossini, who now for the first time heard Lablache sing, was a sufficient stimulus to induce the latter to exert himself to the utmost, and the curtain fell amid a thunder of applause, such as has rarely been indulged in by the aristocratic frequenters of *les Italiens*. Lablache afterwards sang in *Semiramide*, *Cenerentola*, and other operas until the close of the season, when he withdrew from the company, and did not again join it until 1833, when he re-appeared as *Henry VIII.* in *Anna Bolena*. Since then he has remained constant to the Italian Theatre during its transmigration to the Odéon, and subsequently to the Salle Ventadour, where his presence is as indispensable to the *habitués* as that of *la Dica* herself.

It is unnecessary to dwell longer on the qualities and talent of this inimitable singer : his celebrity is European, and his admirers on either side of the channel are legion. Nor are these admirers of his genius alone; the creator of *Pasquale* and *Dulcamara* has other and far nobler claims on the respect of all who can appreciate sterling worth of character and true kindness of heart. If Lablache as an *artiste* has a right to our admiration, as a man he has an equal right to our esteem ; nor is his professional reputation, colossal though it be, his only legacy to posterity.

## MALVEZZI.

A good second-rate tenor, who first appeared in Paris, December 16, 1845, as *Tamas* in *Gemma di Vergy*. His voice is tolerably powerful, but rather harsh and deficient in melody; both as singer and actor, however, he is decidedly superior to Corelli.

## MARIO.

Son of General di Candia, several times appointed Governor of Genoa and Nice by the King of Sardinia. Mario, who was born at Cagliari in 1816, was educated among the King's pages at the Royal Academy of Turin, and subsequently became an officer in the Piedmontese guard. From his early youth he was passionately fond of music, and both Meyerbeer and Donizetti are said to have prophesied his future excellence as a singer. On his arrival in Paris in 1836, the manager of the Académie Royale, whose curiosity was excited by the encomiums lavished in private circles on the young amateur, took an opportunity of hearing him sing, and immediately offered him an engagement, which Mario, after much hesitation, accepted. This greatly irritated his father, who spared neither entreaties nor commands to hinder his son from embracing the career of a public singer: Mario, however, persisted in his resolution, but so far yielded to the General's wish as to consent to let his Christian name alone appear in the bills. He made his first public *début* December 1, 1839, as *Robert-le-Diable*, and his success was decisive. Nevertheless, every theatre has its intrigues, and Mario soon discovered to his cost that the French Opera was no exception to the general rule. After having been promised a continuation of his *débuts* as *Polyeucte*, he was refused it, and was with difficulty permitted to sing in *le Comte Ory*. Halévy's *Drapier* came next, and he then waited patiently until a new part should be entrusted to him, earning his salary with but little fatigue, it is true, but not the less anxious to be put once more on active service.

Luckily for him, *l'Elisir d'Amore* was about to be revived at the Ita-

*tiens*, and Rubini declining to sing *Nemorino*, the manager of the Opera was requested to allow Mario to sustain the character for a few representations. No objection was made, and our hero, after meeting with a very favourable reception in the theatre, where he was really in his right place, profited by his *congé* to sing *Lucrezia Borgia*, etc., in London. The success he obtained there induced him, on his return to Paris, to solicit the cancelling of his engagement, which was agreed to by the manager, on condition of his playing (by way of *dédit* and without remuneration) two acts of *Guillaume Tell* and one of *les Huguenots*.

Since then Mario has rapidly advanced in public favour : the progress he has made during the last year as an actor is surprising, and his voice has attained a degree of perfection unequalled since the best days of Rubini. We would particularly instance his singing in *Il Pirata* as a magnificent display of vocal and dramatic ability : the music of this opera, though not wanting in beauty, is hardly of sufficient excellence to become generally popular, unless executed by *artistes* of first-rate talent. Such an *artiste* is Mario, and it is owing to his admirable exertions that this *coup d'essai* of Bellini has been received at Paris with the greatest enthusiasm, whereas other operas of unquestionably superior merit, but by no means as irreproachably performed, have been listened to with comparative indifference.

The peculiar charm of Mario's voice is its delicious freshness and purity : it appears to increase every year in melody as well as in power, and it is difficult to believe, so rich and full are its tones, that the *débutant* of the Académie Royale in 1839, and the first tenor of the *Italiens* in 1846, are one and the same individual. In 1839, Mario was a promising but inexperienced young singer, and an unpractised actor ; in 1846, he is a vocalist of surpassing excellence, and a finished comedian. In 1839, the manager of the French Opera cancelled his engagement without regret ; in 1846, M. Léon Pillet would fain re-engage him on his own terms.

"Il tenor che si perde  
Non tornerà mai più :"



## RONCONI.

If we may rely on the accuracy of a recently published biographical notice of this singer, Giorgio Alessandro Ronconi was born at Venice, December 6, 1812. The profession selected for him by his parents was the army, and he was placed when young in the military college at Milan. Ronconi himself, however, appears to have entertained no great liking for martial glory, having already determined, stimulated by the advice and encouragement of the composer Pacini, to devote himself entirely to the study of vocal music. Finding an excellent professor in his sister, the youthful baryton ventured at last to sing a most difficult *morceau* in presence of the Philo-Dramatic Society of Milan, and the decisive success of this essay induced his father to consent to his persevering in the career for which Nature had evidently intended him.

According to the same biographer, Ronconi, when scarcely nineteen years old, made his first appearance at Paris in 1831, in *la Straniera*. Whether this be fact or fiction we know not, our earliest recollections of this excellent baryton dating only from 1843, in which year, after having already given the *habitués* of her Majesty's Theatre a taste of his quality, Ronconi created an immense sensation in Paris by his admirable singing and acting in *Maria di Rohan* and *Corrado d'Altamura*, as well as in *Il Barbiere*, *I Puritani*, and other stock pieces of the *répertoire*. The favourable impression produced on his *début* has been amply justified by the talent displayed by him in every successive creation, and more particularly in *Nabucco*, much of the popularity enjoyed by Verdi's music in Paris being fairly attributable to his magnificent performance of the leading character.

Ronconi is short in stature, and by no means handsome in face, but his countenance when animated is extremely intelligent, and his energy is at once so intense and so communicative as frequently to excite the most unbounded enthusiasm on the part of his audience, who are irresistibly led away by the inspired earnestness of his acting. His voice is not only remarkable for its power and compass, but also for its extreme purity and melodious richness of tone, qualities which few if any barytons possess in so eminent a degree. His style of singing is that

of the modern Italian school, the predominant feature of which is its simplicity and sparing use of *floriture*. Ronconi, indeed, carries out this principle to its fullest extent, seldom if ever indulging in any display of vocalization, but trusting for effect to the natural beauty of his organ alone.

We do not admire him so much in comic as in serious parts: his *Figaro* we think not only immeasurably inferior to that of Tamburini, but hardly on a par even with that of Fornasari. Comedy is not his forte; neither his voice nor personal appearance qualify him for a *buffo* singer, whereas in parts requiring energy, pathos, or any strong expression of feeling he is unrivalled. It is no discredit to Ronconi to say that but one artist at the present day is capable of sustaining serious and comic characters with equal ability, when we add that that artist is Lablache.

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#### TAGLIAFICO.

This young baryton, after acquiring some celebrity at the Concerts Vivienne, appeared for the first time at the Salle Ventadour on the opening of the season of 1844, in *Linda di Chamouni*. His voice, agreeable in a *salon* or concert room, is not sufficiently powerful in a theatre to admit of his attempting leading characters with success; but as a second singer he is an useful acquisition.

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#### AMIGO (M<sup>re</sup>).

A native of Spain, whose *début* in *la Cenerentola* some years ago promised more than she has since been able to perform. She has been very handsome, and is still a fine-looking woman: as to her vocal abilities, one may judge of them by the parts usually confided to her, of which *Enrichetta* in *I Puritani* is perhaps the most important.

BELLINI (M<sup>re</sup>).

Her best part is the old lady in *Il Barbieri*, which she dresses capitally, and acts with considerable humour. She plays the character, indeed, so well, that we regret ever having seen her play any other.

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BRAMBILLA (M<sup>lle</sup> MARIETTA).

The *contr'alto* of the Salle Ventadour. If the voice of this lady, once so rich and melodious, were still equal to her musical skill, she would be one of the most perfect singers in Europe : as it is, such is her exquisite taste that the defects of her organ are so admirably disguised as to be almost imperceptible. Among the happiest efforts of M<sup>lle</sup> Brambilla are *Arace* in *Semiramide*, *Pierrotto* in *Linda di Chamouni*, and *Maffio Orsini* in *Lucrezia Borgia*.

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BRAMBILLA (M<sup>lle</sup> TERESA).

Younger sister of the preceding. Her *début* in Paris took place at the commencement of the season of 1845-6 in *Nabucco*, and the favourable reception she then experienced was justified by her subsequent performance in *Il Proscritto* and *Il Matrimonio Segreto*.

Her voice is rather thin, but by no means deficient in extent, and she sings with consummate taste. She is moreover an excellent actress, and a handsome showy woman (1).

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BRAMBILLA (M<sup>lle</sup> PEPPINA).

Engaged to supply the place of her sister Teresa. She has lately been singing with success at Barcelona.

(1) An engagement contracted in Italy will prevent M<sup>lle</sup> Teresa Brambilla from returning to Paris this year.

GRISI (M<sup>me</sup> GIULIA).

This admirable syren was born at Milan in 1812. Determining at an early age to follow the career so successfully pursued by her aunt, M<sup>me</sup> Grassini, she applied herself seriously to the study of vocal music, and after receiving some instruction from one of her uncles, a clever professor, made her first appearance on any stage at Bologna, in 1828, at the age of sixteen. In the same year, besides singing in an opera expressly composed for her by Millitoti, she played *Giulietta* in *I Capuletti* at Florence, and afterwards appeared successively at Pisa and at Milan, where she created *Adalgisa* in *Norma*.

In 1832 she left Venice for Paris, where she was engaged to replace M<sup>me</sup> Malibran at the Salle Favart; and though she had to contend against the *souvenir* of her predecessor, her youth, beauty, and talent made a most favourable impression on her audience, and she speedily became popular. But her merits as singer and actress were not fully appreciated until the production of *Anna Bolena*, when her performance of the unfortunate heroine revealed so many vocal and dramatic excellencies as to place her at once among the first *artistes* of the day. Since that period M<sup>me</sup> Grisi's reputation has become European; her name is now mentioned in the same breath with those of Catalani, Pasta, and Malibran; she is no longer the timid and inexperienced *débütante*, but the Queen of song, the accomplished *prima donna*; she is no longer *Adalgisa*,—she is *Norma*!

Her beauty is strictly classic, and there is a mingled grace and majesty in her attitudes that reminds one of the marvels of ancient Grecian art. To see her in a moment of inspiration, her noble countenance expressing with the utmost truth a sentiment of scorn, of anger, or of dignity, one would imagine her to be a statue of Phidias endowed with life. M<sup>me</sup> Grisi is admirable whatever part she undertakes, either as the haughty *Semiramide* or the playful *Norina*, as *Elvira* or *Ninette*, as *Lucrezia Borgia* or *Doña Anna*; but as *Norma* she is sublime. The "*Infelice, veleno bevesti!*" in *Lucrezia*, the "*Son Vergin*" in *I Puritani*, magnificent displays of vocal and dramatic power as they are, must yield the palm to her utterance of that last reproach addressed to the faithless Roman :

"Qual cor tralalà,  
Qual cor perdesti!"

Love, hatred, jealousy, despair, every passion that can be supposed to have agitated the heart of the neglected Priestess, are all concentrated in that final appeal.

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LANDI (M<sup>lle</sup>).

An unpretending young singer, with a weak but not disagreeable voice, who first appeared at Paris in October 1845, in *Nabucco*.

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LIBRANDI (M<sup>lle</sup>).

Without any exception, the worst *Adalgisa* we ever remember to have heard. M<sup>lle</sup> Librandi has neither voice nor method; her gestures are awkward and embarrassed, and she seldom sings either in time or tune. We cannot but think that she has mistaken her vocation.

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PERSIANI (M<sup>me</sup> FANNT).

This charming songstress, daughter of the celebrated tenor Tacchiniardi, and wife of Persiani, the composer of *Inez di Castro* and *Il Fantasma*, was born at Rome, October 4, 1812. Her father was averse to her adopting the stage as a profession, although when she was only eleven years old, a sonnet was addressed to her by the illustrious *cantatrice* Mombelli, whom she had moved to tears by her singing. Subsequently, the Grand Duke of Tuscany, wishing to satisfy himself as to the real merits of the young vocalist, invited her to sing at several concerts given by him during Lent, on each of which occasions she was greatly applauded.

In 1830 she married Persiani, and two years later an event occurred

which materially influenced her future career. The opera of *Francesca di Rimini* was on the point of being produced at Leghorn, and in it two eminent female singers were to appear. On the day of rehearsal one only answered the call : manager and composer were in despair, for where on so short a notice could they hope to find a substitute for the other? At last it was suggested that M<sup>me</sup> Persiani, who was then residing with her family at a villa near Leghorn, might perhaps be induced to aid them in this dilemma, and a messenger was forthwith dispatched to her, stating the circumstances, and imploring her to take a part in the opera. After some hesitation, she with her father's and husband's consent agreed to sing, and thus with scarcely any preparation and quite unexpectedly made her first appearance on the stage. Her success was so decisive, that she had no further excuse for abandoning a career so auspiciously begun, and a few days after her *début* signed an engagement for Padua. From thence she went to Venice, where M<sup>me</sup> Pasta was then singing, and soon became the idol of the Venetians, who unanimously christened her *little Pasta*.

In the spring of 1833 she sang at Milan, where some verses, commemorative of her success, were addressed to her by Romani ; and in the autumn of the same year quitted Lombardy for Rome, during her stay in which city two operas, *I Promessi Sposi*, and *Misanthropia e Pentimento*, were composed expressly for her. At Naples, Genoa, and Pisa, M<sup>me</sup> Persiani met with equally enthusiastic admirers, and it was on the occasion of her second visit to Naples, in 1835, that the following incident occurred to her during a representation of *Lucia*. She was changing her costume between the acts, when a lady entered her dressing room, and after a few preparatory compliments on her singing took hold of M<sup>me</sup> Persiani's hair, which was flowing in wild profusion over her shoulders, and asked her if it were really her own. Having speedily satisfied herself on this point, the stranger said with a smile to the astonished *Lucia* : " Allow me, Signora, since I have no wreath of flowers to offer you, to twine you one with your own beautiful tresses! " and she did so. This was a proud moment for M<sup>me</sup> Persiani, for the *incognue* was Malibran.

In the same year, coming by sea from Naples to Leghorn, to fulfil an engagement at Florence, our heroine fell seriously ill during the voyage.

and on her arrival in the Tuscan capital in a state of complete exhaustion was compelled by the manager, in accordance with the terms of her engagement, to appear in *I Puritani*. Finding all remonstrance ineffectual, she prepared to obey, hoping that the public would be more indulgent than the *impresario*. She had, however, hardly sung a few notes ere, for the first time in her life, she was greeted with a storm of hisses. This unexpected reception, added to her state of physical weakness, would have disheartened any other *cantatrice*; M<sup>me</sup> Persiani, on the contrary, continued her part with the most perfect *sang-froid*, as if she were totally indifferent either to the applause or disapprobation of her hearers.

A few weeks later, when she had completely recovered her strength and voice, the popular admiration knew no bounds, and every successive appearance of the once hissed invalid was greeted by the *habitués* of la Pergola with the most uproarious demonstrations of enthusiasm. But the reparation came too late, and M<sup>me</sup> Persiani, as insensible to their praises as she had hitherto been to their reproaches, awaited only the termination of her engagement to bid Florence an eternal adieu.

She was singing at Bologna in 1836, when propositions were made to her from the manager of the Italian Opera in Paris : owing to engagements previously contracted both in Italy and at Vienna, she was unable to accept them until the following year, when she made her first appearance before the Parisians in October, 1837, as *Aminta* in *la Sonnambula*.

Nine years have elapsed since her *début*, and M<sup>me</sup> Persiani's reputation is now at its zenith : equally popular in England, France, Germany, and Italy, admired on the stage and respected in private life, she may well look back with pride to her past career, a career as brilliant as it is irreproachable.

As an actress, M<sup>me</sup> Persiani possesses great versatility of talent, and is alike excellent in serious and in *buffo* parts : nothing indeed can be more exquisite than her performance of *Lucia*, or more charmingly naïve than her playful coquetry as *Adina* in *l'Elisir d'Amore*. She is short in stature, pale and thin-faced, with expressive eyes and beautiful blonde hair : her countenance is at once intelligent and pleasing, and

her manner is lady-like and unassuming. As a vocalist she more resembles a bird than a human creature : it is impossible to conceive anything more musical or more flexible than her voice, which, clear as a silver bell, can touch the highest and lowest notes with equal facility and equal sweetness. She is, in a word, as has been well remarked, "unquestionably, as regards taste, style, and vocalization, superior to any living singer."

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Among the favourite operas in the *répertoire* are :

Il Barbiere di Seviglia.  
 Il Matrimonio Segreto.  
 Il Don Giovanni.  
 Norma.  
 Il Pirata.  
 La Sonnambula.  
 I Puritani.  
 La Gazza Ladra.  
 La Donna del Lago.  
 Cenerentola.  
 Otello.  
 Semiramide.  
 Tancredi.  
 Don Pasquale.  
 Lucia di Lammermoor.  
 Lucrezia Borgia (la Rinegata).  
 L'Elisir d'Amore.  
 Belisario.  
 Anna Bolena.  
 Linda di Chamouni.  
 Nabucodonozor.



## CHAPTER VII.

### VAUDEVILLE.

PLACE DE LA BOURSE.

*Manager, M. Hippolyte Cogniard (1).*

"Le Français né matin créa le Vaudeville."  
BOILEAU.

THE *Chanson* or *Vaudeville* has for centuries enjoyed the greatest popularity throughout France, the earliest specimen on record, the subject of which is the siege of Péronne, dating as far back as the reign of Charles VI. This was followed by others, referring successively to the wars of Francis the First, to the defeat of that monarch at Pavia, to the deaths of Henry the Second and Charles the Ninth, and to the departure of Mary Stuart for Scotland. From this latter epoch down to the present day, scarcely any political event of any note has occurred without its immediately forming the subject of a *vaudeville*, and it has been well remarked that the history of France during the

(1) Author, conjointly with his brother, the manager of the Porte Saint Martin, of several popular pieces, among which are *Pauvre Jacques*, *le Royaume des Femmes*, *Bruno le Filleur*, and *la Biche au Bois*.

last fifty or sixty years might be told by simply repeating the *refrains* or chorusses of the *chansons* composed at different periods.

Thus, when Louis XVI. became a father, the people sang,

"Réjouissons-nous tous, enfin,  
C'est un Dauphin, c'est un Dauphin."

This was changed a few years later to

"Dansons la Carmagnole  
Au bruit du son  
Du canon."

Then came the "*Marseillaise*,"

"Allons, enfans de la patrie,  
Le jour de gloire est arrivé."

Then,

"Napoléon est Empereur,  
V'là e'que c'est qu'd'avoir du cœur!"

The *chanson* of the restoration was,

"Nous avons notre père de Grand,  
Nous avons notre père."

And lastly, as an accompaniment to the cannons of 1830, the people sang :

"Soldat du drapeau tricolore,  
D'Orléans, toi qui l'as porté."

The origin of the term *vaudeville* is generally allowed to be as follows. About 1450, there lived at Vire, a small town in Normandy, an artisan named Olivier Basselin, who passed his leisure hours in composing *chansons*. These he sang in the midst of the wars that then devastated France, and even continued singing on the field of battle, where he perished fighting bravely against the English. His songs were called *Vaux de Vire*, because they were sung not only at *Vire*, but also in the adjoining district called *la Vallée*, or *le Val*; and subsequently the name of *Vau de Ville* was given generally to all couplets which, after having been sung by the country people, became equally popular with the citizens and burgesses of the different French towns.

The Vaudeville has been well called "the arsenal, from whence proceed the arms most dreaded in France, the epigram and the satirical couplet. A man may forgive a blow, but never an epigram, for while



the one is soon forgotten, the other may survive both its author and him on whom it is written. »

For some time the vaudevilles which satirized the court and nobility were called *Noëls* : these were written principally during the reigns of Louis XV., and XVI. The different existing governments have always declared war against the *chanson*. A certain cardinal caused a man who had alluded to him in a song to be shut up in an iron cage, and several young men were sent to the Bastille for writing against M<sup>me</sup> de Pompadour. Nay, in our own day, Béranger was confined nine months in prison for his songs against the government. The *censure* has been always far less lenient towards the *couplet* than towards either comedy or drama, and the reason is obvious ; six or eight lines are so soon learnt, and so easily remembered.

The term *vaudeville* was also formerly applied to those pieces, the subjects of which were the passing events or current scandalous anecdotes of the day. Moreover, many pieces, ancient as well as modern, concluded with couplets which the actors sang successively : these were likewise called *vaudevilles*. Thus, even at the present day, the couplet which terminates a piece is called the *vaudeville final* (1).

In 1790, Sedaine, whose comic opera of *le Diable à Quatre* has recently furnished the Académie Royale with one of its prettiest ballets, and who hated all vaudevilles because their popularity exceeded that of his own pieces, wrote the following couplet against a vaudeville by Pils and Barré, which was then attracting crowds to the Comédie Italienne. It will be seen that, in this couplet at least, Sedaine had as little respect for *rhyme* as he had for the *vaudeville*.

“ Bonhomme Vaudeville,  
Laissez-nous donc tranquilles.  
Amusez-nous par vos propos,  
Et par vos jolis madrigaux ;  
Mais ne quittez pas vos humeurs,  
Bonhomme Vaudeville ” &c.

Until nearly the close of the last century, there existed in Paris no theatre exclusively devoted to the performance of vaudevilles. After

(1) All pieces not decidedly operatic, and yet interspersed with couplets, are now termed vaudevilles.

(2) It was partly owing to this couplet that the same Pils and Barré founded the Vaudeville theatre.

the union of the Opéra Comique (where they had hitherto been played) with the Comédie Italienne, the want of a theatre specially reserved for the representation of their productions was strongly felt by the vaudeville writers of that day ; inasmuch as they not only had the mortification of seeing their compositions thrown aside to make way for operas, comedies, and even dramas, but were also subjected to the satirical attacks of Sedaine and his associates, who affected to treat them and their pieces with the utmost contempt.

Piis, already annoyed at the couplet quoted above, and not less indignant at his demand of a small pension from the Comédie Italienne, in return for his many successful vaudevilles produced there, three of which alone had brought in upwards of 3,000,000 francs to the treasury, being refused, conceived the idea of transferring his entire *répertoire* to a new theatre. He communicated his design to Barré, who, in conjunction with Rosières, an actor of the Comédie Italienne, and two other individuals, aided him to carry it into execution.

This was in 1790, at which period there existed in the Rue de Chartres a public ball-room called the winter Vauxhall, or more commonly the Little Panthéon. On the site of this building the Vaudeville was erected, and opened for the first time January 12, 1792, with a piece written by Piis, called *les Deux Panthéons*. This gave rise to the following couplet :

" Dans le pays où nous sommes,  
Je vois qu'il existe à Paris,  
Et le Panthéon des grands hommes,  
Et le Panthéon des petits."

This opening piece, partly owing to its extreme length, and partly to the badness of the acting, was soundly hissed, and so disconcerted were Piis and Barré with the result of their first attempt, that they would probably have relinquished their enterprise in despair, had not Rosières encouraged them to persevere, and by his own exertions caused an entirely different performance to be given on the following evening, the success of which at once decided the existence and future prosperity of the Vaudeville.

Three authors in particular, Desfontaines, Deschamps, and Desprez, contributed not a little by their writings to the brilliant career of the newly established theatre, which occasioned it to be said that the Vau-

deville was a delightful *maison de campagne*, where one was sure to meet with *des champs, des prés et des fontaines*.

Among the best actors who flourished at this period were Rosières, Vertpré, Carpentier, and Chapelle. The last of these was short and stout, with eyes which were continually opening and shutting, thick black eyebrows, a mouth always half-open, and a pair of legs resembling in shape the feet of an elephant. His credulity was proverbial, and his comrades were not slow in taking advantage of it. He was told one day that *diligences* were in future to be made of India rubber, in order that they might be able to take up all the passengers they met on the road, however numerous they might be. The gravity with which Chapelle listened to this *fact* induced Laporte, the last of the Harlequins (†), to tell him in confidence that the Pope, accompanied by his wife and family, was about to enter Paris on a certain day. Off ran Chapelle to the barrier by which the Holy Father was said to be expected, and amused every one by asking, with great apparent interest, at what o'clock the Pope and his lady were likely to arrive.

Seveste, the father of the present managers of the *Banlieue* theatres, and himself an excellent actor, took especial delight in mystifying poor Chapelle, and one day, on his return from fulfilling an engagement at Rouen, told the unfortunate dupe that during his stay in that town he had succeeded in taming a carp so perfectly that it used to follow him about like a dog; adding that he was much grieved at having lost it. "How did that happen?" said Chapelle, greatly interested. "Why," replied Seveste, "one evening I took it to my dressing-room at the theatre; as I was going home after the performance, a terrible storm came on, and my poor carp, in trying to jump across a gutter, fell in, and was drowned." "How very unlucky!" cried Chapelle: "I always thought a carp could swim like a fish!"

As he grew older, however, Chapelle, weary of being continually hoaxed, made up his mind to believe nothing, and carried his scepticism so far as to reply to a friend's anxious inquiries after his

(†) Laporte, the father of the well-known manager of the Italian Opera in London, was for 36 years a member of the Vaudeville company. He was desperately enamoured of the actress who played Columbine to his Harlequin, and said to one of his friends that were he to perform without a mask, his eyes would be seen to fill with tears, and his whole face to tremble when she was on the stage.

health, "Ask somebody else that question, my fine fellow, you can't take *me* in now." He died at Chartres early in January, 1824.

His comrade Carpentier became towards the close of his career so habitual a drunkard, that he completely lost his memory, being not only incapable of studying new parts, but even of recollecting old ones. He was at last reduced to play mere *bouts de rôles*, and indeed rarely appeared on the stage at all. A long time had elapsed without his taking part in any piece, when one evening, on the occasion of a procession representing the different trades being introduced at the end of a vaudeville, he dressed himself up as a barber, and came on with the rest, a comb behind his ear, and a powder-puff in his hand. The audience instantly recognized their old favourite, and applauded him for several minutes after he had left the stage. As soon as he found himself surrounded by his comrades behind the scenes, he began to cry with emotion, and exclaimed. "My friends, they knew me again, they knew me again!" In one of his parts, Carpentier had a couplet to sing, the first verse of which ran as follows :

"Un acteur,  
Qui veut de l'acteur  
Suivre en tout  
L'esprit et le goût,  
Doit d'abord,  
De savoir son rôle,  
Faire au moins le petit effort."

Here he stopped short, and repeated the same verse thrice, but could get no further : from this day a settled gloom came over him, and he soon committed suicide by throwing himself out of a window.

Among the most popular actresses of the same period were M<sup>me</sup> Du-chaume, Molière, and Sara Lescaut.

\* \* \* \* \*

During the revolution, the Vaudeville as well as the other theatres had its occasional troubles. Two of its authors, Radet and Desfontaines, were imprisoned for six months for a supposed reference in one of their piece to the trial of Marie Antoinette. There was then no *censure*, but authors and even actors were frequently taken up and imprisoned on account of some unfortunate couplet or phrase considered, whether with or without foundation signified little, as a political allusion.

It was for a long time customary at the Vaudeville to preface every

new piece with a *couplet d'annonce* : this *couplet* often served as the means of introducing allusions in praise of some recent victory or other important event of the day. Thus, on the first representation of *René le Sage*, just as the curtain was about to rise, news arrived of the ratification by Napoleon of the Treaty of Amiens. Laporte came forward, and while the sound of the cannon firing in celebration of the event was distinctly audible, sang the following *couplet*, hastily composed by the authors behind the scenes.

" Pour éviter certaine guerre  
Entre le public et l'auteur,  
Par un *couplet* préliminaire  
On vous engage à la douceur.  
En conséquence, moi, Laporte,  
J'allais vous demander la paix,  
Le canon a la voix plus forte,  
Il vous l'annonce, et je me tais."

On another occasion, hearing that General Moreau, who had just erected a monument to Turenne, was in the theatre, they sang :

" Du Danube c'est le vainqueur,  
Sage et modeste en sa conduite,  
Il exécute avec valeur  
Ce qu'avec prudence il médite :  
Par le plus noble monument  
Rappelant Turenne à notre âge,  
Il sait encore, en l'imitant,  
Le rappeler bien davantage."

*A propos* of these *couplets d'annonce*, we must not omit to mention one, the effect of which was electrical. On the evening of the first representation of *J. J. Rousseau, or la Vallée de Montmorency*, the last of which titles alone had been put in the bills, Laporte sang :

" Arlequin ne vous a promis  
Que le tableau d'une vallée,  
Mais d'un de vos meilleurs amis  
L'ombre s'y trouvera mêlée,  
Si le titre que l'auteur prend  
N'est qu'un titre faux et postiche,  
Le véritable était trop grand  
Pour la petite affiche!"

This *couplet* was received with the utmost enthusiasm, and was repeated three times.

On Bonaparte's joining the camp at Boulogne, in 1804, the manager of the Vaudeville was summoned thither with the *élite* of his company. On this occasion the vaudevillist Barré celebrated Napoleon's victories

as fifty years before the *chaussonnier* Favart had celebrated those of Marshal Saxe, and received, as did the other two authors who accompanied him, a pension of 3,000 francs.

A piece which had a long run shortly after the Boulogne expedition was *Fanchon la Vielleuse*, the heroine being a pretty Savoyard girl who had amassed a large fortune by selling song-books for a penny. Fanchon was no fictitious damsel, but had actually existed: she was represented by M<sup>me</sup> Belmont, an actress in great favour with the public, and the notoriety (if not the success) of the piece was increased by the celebrated Abbé Geoffroy's writing some of his bitterest articles against it.

Other favourite actresses of that period were M<sup>me</sup> Hervey, afterwards of the Théâtre Français, M<sup>lle</sup> Rivière, the talented representative of *Jeanne d'Arc*, to whose portraits she bore a striking resemblance; M<sup>me</sup> Desmares, M<sup>lle</sup> Minette, authoress and actress, and last, not least, M<sup>lle</sup> Déjazet and Jenny Vertpré.

In these, the golden days of the Vaudeville, slight disputes frequently arose between it and other theatres, which, however, were rather beneficial than otherwise to the public, inasmuch as they furnished matter for many amusing hits and pleasantries. Thus, the Théâtre Français happening to bring out a piece interspersed with songs, the theatre of the Rue de Chartres immediately produced another, called "*La Tragédie au Vaudeville*," saying that if the Comédie Française sang vaudevilles, the Vaudeville had an equal right to sing tragedy.

Again, on the Opera's announcing an oratorio called "The Creation of the World," the bills of the Vaudeville displayed two days after "The Recreation of the World."

In 1816, Barré gave up the management to Désaugiers, the *chaussonnier*, who, says Brazier (1), was too kind and yielding for his office, and had not the heart to refuse the most unreasonable request. About that time Scribe began his career of success, seconded by Mélesville, Bayard, and other able writers. M<sup>me</sup> Perrin, a provincial actress, made an extremely brilliant *début*, and Gontier, who had failed at the Français, became at the Vaudeville one of the best actors of his day.

(1) *Histoire des Petits Théâtres de Paris.*



After the restoration, almost every new piece contained allusions to the victories of *la Grande Armée*, and scarcely one was produced in which there were not at least a dozen couplets about glory, laurels, and similar subjects: the military characters in these pieces were invariably played by Philippe, Lepeintre *ainé*, and Fontenay.

In 1819, M. Delestre Poirson, having obtained permission to open the Gymnase, soon contrived to entice thither not only Scribe, but also Gontier and M<sup>me</sup> Perrin. The public, flocking in crowds to the new theatre, began to desert the Vaudeville, and Désaugiers in despair resigned his post to M. Bérard, but eventually resumed it at the general request of the shareholders. On his death in 1827, Messrs. de Guérchy and Bernard Léon became joint managers until 1829, when they were succeeded by M. Etienne Arago. He had not long held the directorial reins when the revolution of 1830 broke out, and, wishing to profit by the occasion, he produced, in conjunction with M. Duvert (author of *l'Homme Blasé*, *Riche d'Amour* etc.), a *pièce de circonstance* called the 27th, 28th, and 29th of July, which was very successful. It was then that the Vaudeville temporarily assumed the title of *Théâtre National*.

Under the management of M. Etienne Arago the theatre in the Rue de Chartres enjoyed a long career of prosperity: the company, already consisting of Lafont, Lepeintre *ainé*, Arnal, Volnys, M<sup>me</sup> Dussert, Doche, Thénard, Guillemin, and Brohan (1), was still further strengthened by the engagement of Emile Taigny and his wife, of M<sup>lle</sup> Louise Mayer, Balthazar, and Fargueil, and a few years later, by the brilliant *debuts* of the lovely Eugénie Fleury, aptly christened the "prettiest rose-bud of the Vaudeville." (2).

(1) M<sup>lle</sup> Suzanne Brohan's first Parisian *début* took place May 30, 1822, at the Odéon, as *Borine* in *Turkfe*, and, with the exception of a short engagement accepted by her at Rouen, she remained at that theatre until 1828, in which year she appeared at the Vaudeville as *Denise* in *Frantz Mari-Garçon* with most decided success.

In 1833, she made a *début* at the Théâtre Français, but soon returned to the Vaudeville, accompanying the *troupe* successively to the Boulevard Bonne Nouvelle and Place de la Bourse. Her retirement was a heavy blow to the theatre, nor has her loss been entirely filled up even to the present day.

Roger de Beauvoir, speaking of this charming actress, says: "While on the stage she produced on her audience the effect of sparkling Champagne: her repartees were delivered with unequalled piquancy, and the pungency of her witty sallies was increased by the flexible and ever-varying expression of her countenance."

M<sup>lle</sup> Angéline Brohan, the excellent *coactrice* of the Théâtre Français, is a daughter of this talented actress.

(2) Now M<sup>me</sup> Doche.

Then came a succession of pieces, in which the Kings of France, from Henry II. to Louis XV., appeared in turn; among these the best were *Madame Du Barry* (1), *Marie Mignot*, and *la Camargo*. Then also the name of Arnal gradually acquired a popularity which still remains undiminished, some of his greatest triumphs being achieved in the pieces in which he and Lepeintre *jeune* played together. In one of these, Arnal, bringing his enormous associate in front of the stage, addressed the *parterre* as follows: "Gentlemen, what you see here (pointing to Lepeintre *jeune*) is supposed to be in all probability a man; the excrescence of flesh which you perceive between the eyes and the mouth seems intended for a nose; these have some resemblance to arms, and those may very possibly be legs." This scene lasted some time, and at length, while the spectators were convulsed with laughter at this absurd but irresistible exhibition, Lepeintre *jeune*, turning with the most benevolent smile possible to Arnal, blandly asked him "how he did?" To which Arnal replied with an air of offended dignity, and in that peculiar tone of voice which he only can assume: "You're another!"

This brilliant era in the history of the Vaudeville was abruptly terminated by a most disastrous calamity: about four in the morning of July 18, 1838, the theatre from some unexplained cause took fire, and, notwithstanding every attempt to check the flames, was in a few hours consumed. It is worthy of remark that, not long before this unfortunate occurrence, the performances at the Vaudeville had been on the point of being suspended by ministerial order, on the ground of the building being insecure; the execution of this order having been temporarily delayed from a regard to those parties whose interests would have suffered by its being carried into effect. It appears, moreover, from the following anecdote, that the public were not altogether without a presentiment of some danger impending over their favourite theatre.

One evening, during the performance of *Renoulin de Coen*, an individual, sitting alone in one of the boxes, and evidently more engaged in remarking the dilapidated state of the theatre than in attending to the piece, happened to give two or three slight taps with his cane against the

(1) Charminglly played by M<sup>re</sup> Albert.

ceiling of the box in which he sat, probably in order to test its stability. A cloud of dust immediately arose, which was mistaken by the audience for smoke, and a general rush was made to the doors, while the originator of this sudden panic, at a loss to account for the tumult of which he was the involuntary cause, remained quietly in his place.

Arnal was at the moment on the stage, and appeared not a little astonished at the alarm depicted on every countenance : at length, seeing that he was soon likely to be left alone in his glory, he advanced to the footlights, and asked what was the matter ?

“ The house is on fire ! ” cried forty or fifty voices.

Arnal stared, then buttoning the blue coat he wore with an air of virtuous indignation, exclaimed :

“ *Ah ça !* do you think, if there was any danger, I should amuse myself by staying here ? ”

This sally excited a general roar of laughter, and the real origin of the panic being ere long discovered, *Renardin de Caen* was suffered to proceed without further interruption.

The losses sustained by several of the performers on the occasion of the fire were considerable : the treasurer, however, contrived to rescue his cash-box from the flames ; and M. Doche, who had recently succeeded his father as *chef d'orchestre*, was equally fortunate in saving his violin (1).

After a temporary visit to the provinces, the company adjourned provisionally to the Boulevard Bonne-Nouvelle, where a certain M. Legras had established a *Café-Spectacle* ; his *troupe* being composed of actors who could find no better engagement elsewhere, his orchestra of two blind men, and his *répertoire* of pieces refused by every other theatre, and purchased by him at the rate of ten francs each. This *cabaret dramatique*, as it has been aptly christened, after undergoing all necessary repairs and purifications, was transformed into a pretty little theatre, in which M. Etienne Arago resumed for a time his managerial functions. He, however, soon resigned them in favour of M. Trubert,

(1) M. Doche is a very clever composer, and has added many charming airs to the musical *répertoire* of the Vaudeville. Among his best productions are the famous *Sou-nette du Diable*, and the very original *musée* dispersed throughout *Satan, ou le Diable à Paris*. He is also the composer of *le Feuf du Malabar*, a comic operetta, and of a *messe* performed a year or two ago in one of the Parisian churches with great effect.

a *ci-devant marchand de rubans*, whose literary capacities were of a very moderate order. Finding his treasury nearly empty, the new director took as partner an ex-manager of the Ambigu, who brought money enough to pay the actors' salaries for a few months : when that supply was gone, M. Trubert hit upon the ingenious expedient of giving public balls in his theatre, hoping thereby to benefit his exchequer. The first of these entertainments, however, was very thinly attended, and on Trubert's complaining of it to a friend, the latter remarked that such was almost always the case with the first ball. " Then," replied the worthy manager, " another time, I will begin with the second."

On May 17th, 1840, the Vaudeville took possession of its present quarters in the Place de la Bourse (1), and M. Trubert being eventually succeeded by M. Ancelot, a new epoch in the history of this theatre commenced. From October 1842 to August 1845, the *répertoire*, which during the management of M. Trubert had already been enriched by the production of *les Mémoires du Diable*, *Marguerite*, *la Jolie Fille du Faubourg*, etc., was still further improved by the addition of several successful pieces, among which we may especially cite *Loïsa*, by M<sup>me</sup> Ancelot, *l'Homme Blasé*, *la Polka en Province*, and *Satan*. The company, comprising Arnal, Bardou, Amant, Félix, Laferrière, Fer-ville (2), Leclère, Adolphe (3), M<sup>me</sup> Doche, Thénard, and Guillemin, supported by other *artistes* of merit, formed an *ensemble* of talent rarely met with even in a Parisian theatre, and ensured for a long period the prosperity of the Vaudeville. The truth, however, of the proverb " union is strength " was strikingly manifested on the secession of Laferrière and M<sup>me</sup> Doche from the *troupe* in April, 1845 (4). From that time until the retirement of M. Ancelot, the Vaudeville, notwithstanding the engagement of M<sup>lle</sup> Figeac (5), and the production of a somewhat

(1) This theatre, originally the *Théâtre des Nouveautés*, had been for some time provisionally occupied by the company of the Opéra Comique.

(2) This excellent actor has recently returned to the Gymnase after an absence of several years.

(3) This most promising young comic actor, whose creation of *Guichonnet* in *la Polka en Province* will long be remembered by the *habitues* of the Vaudeville, died in the summer of 1845, greatly regretted.

(4) In Paris the theatrical year commences on the first of April, from which day most engagements are dated.

(5) This very pleasing actress and pretty woman has lately been compelled to retire from the stage owing to a partial loss of sight.

lengthy piece, called *l'Amour dans tous les Quartiers*, was little frequented by the public, except during the performances of General Tom Thumb.

In August, 1845, M. Hippolyte Cogniard, one of the directors of the Porte Saint Martin, became lessee of the Vaudeville, which re-opened on the 30th of the same month, after remaining closed a few days for the purpose of undergoing some necessary repairs and alterations. One of the first acts of the new manager was the engagement of Bernard Léon, who reappeared on the opening night in his original character of *Crochard* in *le Bal d'Ouvriers*, as gay and mirth-provoking as ever. This acquisition was shortly followed by one still more important in the person of M<sup>me</sup> Doche, whose return to the Vaudeville, about three months after M. Cogniard's installation, was generally regarded as an excellent guarantee for the future prosperity of the theatre (1).

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## THE COMPANY.

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### AMANT.

The dramatic career of this clever and careful actor dates from 1830, in which year he was engaged at the *Banlieue* theatres: in 1831, he made his *début* at the Folies Dramatiques, where he remained until 1833. He then passed two years at Havre, and finally, May 1, 1835, appeared at the Vaudeville, to which theatre he has been attached ever since.

Amant is one of the few really sterling actors scattered about in the different Parisian theatres: gifted by nature with a flexible countenance and comic voice, he is amusing without being ridiculous, and has the rare power of being able to make his audience laugh *with* instead of *at* him. To authors he is invaluable, for though he himself may not

(1) The recent engagement of M<sup>me</sup> Albert is another incontestable proof of the present manager's directorial ability.

wholly ensure the success of a piece, he nevertheless contributes in a great measure towards it by the originality and *finesse* of his acting. Among his best personations we may cite the *Chevalier de la Rapinière* in *les Mémoires du Diable*, a most masterly creation, which Bouffé himself could hardly have surpassed; *le Baron* in *la Grisette et l'Héritière*, *Jean Remy* in *l'Homme Blasé*, a subordinate character, but which in his hands has become a prominent part, and *Boisfleury* in *les Trois Loges*.

Amant's popularity is not confined to the stage alone : he is deservedly esteemed and respected in private life, being a most amiable as well as highly intelligent man, and in every sense of the word an honour to his profession.

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#### ARNAL (ETIENNE).

This most comic of all comic actors was born in Paris, December 31, 1798, "*filz d'un épicier*," as he himself tells us in his admirable epistle to Bouffé. Early in 1812, when scarcely fourteen years of age, he voluntarily enlisted in the regiment called *la garde du Roi de Rome*. Some months after, this corps was strengthened by the enrolment of a number of young men selected from the orphan hospitals, most of whom were in their sixteenth year, and towards the end of 1813, the tallest and strongest of these youthful warriors, Arnal among the rest, were transferred to the *tirailleurs*. Our hero was at that time remarkable for his military ardour, a quality which has since given way to more prudential considerations, as the following anecdote will show.

In 1815, he was stationed with his regiment on the bridge of Neuilly, among the troops assembled to defend that entrance into Paris against the attacks of the allied army. Beside him was a young acquaintance, constitutionally timid, whose only thought, in spite of the remonstrances of his more valiant comrade, was how to get out of the way of the bullets whistling about him. After having exhausted all his eloquence, Arnal, as a last resource, drew his sword, and declared to his trembling associate that if he showed any further symptom of fear, he himself would run him through the body. This comfortable assurance silenced

the poor youth for the time, but he nevertheless waited more eagerly than ever for a favourable opportunity to escape; and profiting by the moment when Arnal was taking a careful aim at a most ferocious-looking Cossack, he fairly bolted, unseen by his heroic companion. The next day Arnal, sword in hand, presented himself at the house of the fugitive, with the intention of most loyally keeping his promise, but the culprit was nowhere to be found, and the matter dropped.

Fifteen years later, in July 1830, the *ci-devant* warrior had become the principal comic actor of the Vaudeville, and his ideas of military glory had also undergone a considerable change. It was therefore with the most philosophical indifference that on the memorable 29th he listened to the skirmish going on beneath his windows between the people and the Swiss guards who were defending the Louvre. Nay, thinking that some stray bullet might perhaps find its way into his apartment, he even adopted the prudent policy of retiring into his kitchen, as being the place where his meditations were the least likely to be disturbed. However, fate willed it otherwise, for he had scarcely ensconced himself in a snug corner when a party of patriots in their shirt sleeves, after having burst open his door with the butt ends of their muskets, commenced firing upon the troops from his windows. Nor was this all; they insisted that Arnal himself should join them, and offered him a musket, which he modestly declined, and was meditating a retreat into his corner when the fiercest-looking of the party, seizing him by the arm, bade him choose whether he would fight against the enemies of the people, or be treated as one of them himself. Arnal, struck with the voice of his interrogator, calmly put on his spectacles, looked him attentively in the face, and, recognising his old Neuilly acquaintance, burst into a loud laugh, in which the other, after a word of explanation from our hero, cordially joined. "We are quits now," said Arnal, "suppose we dine together."

Recurring again to the period of the entrance of the Allies into Paris, we find that shortly after the affair at Neuilly, Arnal, whose martial ardour had by this time considerably abated, probably on account of the insufficiency of his pay (1), obtained his dismissal on the plea of his

(1) The pay of a soldier was then a sou a-day. However, as it often happened that a pair of shoes, a shirt, or other necessary article was required before the wearer was

being short-sighted, and became apprentice or assistant to a button-maker of the name of Hesse. There his principal delight consisted in saving out of his small weekly salary a sufficient sum to enable him to frequent one or other of the theatres every Sunday. He particularly patronized the amateur performances, which occasionally took place at the private theatre kept by Doyen, and one evening, unable any longer to resist his inward conviction that he was intended by Nature for a great tragedian, he himself made his *début* in the character of *Mithridate*. We give the result in his own words :

" Je n'ai point oublié cette fatale date,  
Nous étions chez Doyen, je jouais Mithridate;  
Du fougueux roi de Pont, l'ennemi des Romains,  
Je peignais les fureurs, et des pieds, et des mains;  
Mon public fut saisi de ce rire homérique  
Qui charmaient tant les dieux sur leur montagne antique;  
La pièce était finie, et l'on riait encore  
De mon nez, de ma barbe, et de mon casque d'or.  
Un tel effet, conquis dans les rôles tragiques,  
Semblait me destiner à l'emploi des comiques;  
Aussi dès ce moment, se trouvant bien jago,  
*Mithridate* devint *Jocrisse* corrigé."

" I may be permitted to add," says Arnal, " that I obtained some success in the character of *Jocrisse*. Doyen's *habitués*, however, while they allowed that I was tolerably amusing in this part, all declared with one accord that I was far more comic in *Mithridate*."

These amateur performances were abruptly put a stop to by a discovery on the part of Arnal's master, the button-maker, that he had no further occasion for his assistant's services; our hero, thus unexpectedly compelled to seek some other means of subsistence, bethought himself that a bad actor was better paid than a good soldier, and forthwith applied to Brunet, then manager of the Variétés, for an engagement. We again quote his own words :

" Il consent aussitôt à m'entendre, à me voir;  
Là, l'expose en tremblant mes projets, mon espoir;  
Le bonhomme à mes vœux s'empresse de souscrire,  
Mon air un peu niais, je crois, le fit sourire;  
" Je vous reçois," dit-il, d'un ton des plus moqueurs;  
" Dès demain vous pouvez débiter... dans les chœurs."

entitled to a new supply, small sums were advanced by the sergeant major and deducted afterwards from the regular pay. Thus Arnal himself tells us that during the two years of his military service he never received on an average more than a *croûte* (or the fifth part of a halfpenny) per day.



This was not exactly what Arnal wanted, but it was nevertheless a beginning, and he had sufficient confidence in himself to feel certain that he was not destined to remain long a *figurant*. Indeed, we find him soon after enrolled among the *acteurs*; but, by some inexplicable want of sagacity on the part of the manager, his comic powers were overlooked or unnoticed, and he was made to play the *amoureux*, a line of characters almost as unsuited to his peculiar talent as *Mithridate* itself. Luckily for his reputation, he quitted the Variétés in 1827 for the Vaudeville, where he succeeded an indifferent actor of the name of Guénée; and it is from this moment only that his dramatic career can be said to have fairly begun.

During the nineteen years which have elapsed since that period, Arnal has been the main support of the Vaudeville; his *répertoire* at the present day is more extensive than that of any other actor in Paris, and many of his creations have equalled in popularity the best efforts of Bouffé and Frédérick Lemaitre, the *Gamin de Paris* and *Robert Macaire*. One of the peculiar merits of Arnal's acting is its perfect originality; it is as impossible for him to imitate others as it is for others to imitate him. His look, his manner, his dress, are all his own, and all irresistible; his very entrance on the stage, so natural, so free from all effort, and yet so exquisitely comic, is sufficient, even before he has uttered a word, to excite the merriment of the whole house. Arnal does not trust for effect to any ludicrous inflexion of voice, or to a superabundance of gesticulation; on the contrary, no performer on the French stage is more sparing of either, nor is there anything in his appearance which reminds you that he is playing a part. He can say the drollest things with the most imperceptible gravity, and can see his whole audience, and not only the audience, but the actors around him, convulsed with laughter, without moving a muscle of his countenance. At other times, when his part contains absolutely nothing that in the mouth of any actor but himself could elicit even a smile, he contrives, by a simple "oh!" or "ah!" pronounced apparently in the most innocent tone, to produce an effect which the wittiest dialogue could never have achieved.

Of all the authors who have written for Arnal, Duvert and Lauzanne have succeeded the best in displaying his talent to advantage: *Rena-*

*din de Caen, l'Homme Blâsé, and Pingouin in Riche d'Amour*, are types which they only could have invented, and which he only could have played.

On the production of a new piece, Arnal, like Bouffé, does not merely attend the rehearsals himself with the most unvarying punctuality, but makes all the other actors do the same, and it is this extreme anxiety to leave nothing undone in order to ensure the success of the novelty which has earned him among his comrades the appellation of *mauvais coucheur*. What this in theatrical parlance signifies, he himself shall tell us :

"Un jour tu veux soigner la répétition,  
(C'est le terme technique) : O malédiction !  
Ces dames ce jour-là parlent de leurs dentelles,  
De fleurs, de rubans et d'autres bagatelles,  
On est interrompu ; toi, pour cette rumeur,  
Tu viens de témoigner quelque mauvaise humeur ;  
C'en est fait : à leurs yeux tu seras détestable,  
Pour elles, tu n'es plus qu'un homme insupportable.  
Voilà le lendemain. Tout va donc mieux aller :  
Tu le crois, et déjà tu veux le signaler ;  
Arrive le portier tout chargé de missives ;  
Ah ! ton espoir fait place aux douleurs les plus vives ;  
Paul prévient qu'entraîné par un fâcheux hasard  
Il a passé la nuit au caucase de Musard ;  
Flora, à son grand regret, est encore inexacte ;  
Sa perruche chérie a pris la cataracte ;  
Elle attend le docteur. Lise est, en ce moment,  
Occupée à chercher un nouveau logement.  
De l'obstacle pas un n'a l'âme chagrinée ;  
On ne répète pas ; on a sa matinée.  
Toi seul, qui vois ainsi retarder les progrès,  
Tu laisses échapper des plaintes, des regrets ;  
Dès lors, à tous les yeux tu n'es que ridicule ;  
Sur ton compte, à bas bruit, l'épigramme circule ;  
Et chacun, à l'instant, de répéter en chœur :  
"Laissons-là ce monsieur : c'est un mauvais coucheur."

Arnal is as particular about the dressing and making up of his characters as Bouffé himself, provided always, as the lawyers say, that the character be worth the trouble : otherwise he leaves the author to shift for himself on the first night of performance, and walks through his part in the most cavalier take-it-easy manner possible, as if he were perfectly aware, and not at all sorry, that the piece would never see a second representation.

Arnal is rather under than above the middle height, and to look at his quiet and serious countenance one would set him down for a steady

sober *bourgeois*, or indeed for anything but the comic actor *le plus spirituellement bête* that Paris can boast. It has been gravely said, however, "*Arnal fait rire, parce qu'il est grêlé*;" and thus alone can we account for the anxiety manifested by some admirers of this celebrated comedian, on the occasion of an accident which, in the winter of 1845, nearly cost him his eye-sight, lest on his recovery the traces of the small pox with which his face had hitherto been pitted should be no more visible, as well as for their joy on being assured by the medical man that their apprehensions were unfounded, and that Arnal would speedily be restored to them "*plus grêlé que jamais*."

Few if any actors have more self-possession on the stage than Arnal: he has always his wits about him, and is never at a loss for a repartee. Of this the following anecdote, which went the round of the papers in February, 1844, is a sufficient proof. He was playing one evening in *les Gants Jaunes*, in the course of which piece he (*Anatole*) is instructed to go to No. 40, Rue Saint Honoré, and forgets the number. "*Numéro... numéro*," he began in a grave and puzzled tone; when a spectator in the pit, thinking that the number had really slipped his memory, good-naturedly prompted, "*Quarante*." Arnal stared at him as only Arnal can stare, and presently recommencing, "*Numéro... numéro*," stopped short as if to collect his thoughts, when the entire pit shouted out in a laughing chorus, "*Quarante!*" "*Je le sais, Messieurs*," replied Arnal, "*mais faites semblant de le dire, comme moi de l'ignorer*."

The popularity of this excellent actor is not confined to Paris alone: London, Brussels, and almost every town of importance in France have by turns applauded him, nor has his lucky star to our knowledge ever deserted him, except on one occasion. Once, while on a provincial tour, he happened to play *Une Passion* in a certain country town: unluckily for him, the *habitue's* of the theatre were already familiar with the piece, having seen it performed by a strolling actor with an elastic wig, the effect of which, from its continually bobbing up and down, was extremely ludicrous. Arnal, to his surprise, found his audience cold and serious: in vain he exerted himself to thaw the living icicles before him, nothing would do: they looked one at another, and shrugged their shoulders with a disappointed air, as much as to say: "It's all

very well, but it won't do for us." When the piece was over, Arnal for the first time learnt the cause of his want of success with the good people of——. *They had missed the elastic wig.*

In private life, Arnal is grave, taciturn, and fond of study: he is said to be a regular frequenter of the *Bibliothèque Royale*, and has himself published, besides his epistle to Bouffé, a collection of prettily versified tales and fables, of which the following is a favourable specimen.

PETIT CONTE MORAL.

" Un jour, au sortir d'une école,  
J'aperçois un enfant qui érie à se désoler.  
Je m'approche de lui :—Mon ami, qu'avez-vous ?  
—Ah ! j'ai l'âme bien chagrinée,—  
Me dit-il,—j'ai perdu la pièce de dix sous  
Que ma mère m'avait donnée.  
—Cessez, mon bon ami, de vous désespérer,  
C'est un petit malheur facile à réparer :  
Tenez, voici pour vous une semblable pièce.  
L'enfant sourit d'abord, puis reprend sa tristesse :  
—Eh bien ! qu'avez-vous donc ? encore du chagrin ?  
—Eh ! mais, Monsieur, dit-il, voici pourquoi je pleure :  
Si je n'avais pas, tout à l'heure,  
Perdu dix sous, j'en aurais vingt."

Arnal's salary amounts, we believe, to 36,000 francs a-year, besides a gratification of twenty francs per act every time he plays, and two months' *congé*: thus, a three-act piece, in addition to his regular appointments, brings him in sixty francs a-night.

BACHE.

After quitting the Vaudeville in April, 1845, Bache reappeared there February 26, 1846, as *Apollon in les Dieux de l'Olympe à Paris*. He would be more amusing, were he less inclined to caricature his parts. In burlesque, however, where over-acting is more excusable than it is in vaudeville, he is quite at home; especially in such characters as the Ghost in the parody of *Hamlet*, produced some twenty months ago in *Paris à tous les Diables*, where his pantomime was irresistibly ludicrous (1).

(1) As the *Grand-Prêtre* in *le Roman Comique*, and as *Jean* in *les Chansons Populaires de la France*, Bache is exquisitely droll.

## BALLARD.

Was once employed in a printing-office. He is a most useful though not very brilliant actor, and plays in half the pieces of the *répertoire*. Among his best parts are *Forster* in *Marguerite*, which he looks and acts with the most imperturbable gravity and stiffness, *Godinard* in *la Polka en Province*, and the English groom in *le Mari de la Dame de Chœurs*. Ballard is almost as celebrated for his jokes and *calembours* as Lepeintre *jeune*, but, unlike his ancient comrade, he certainly does not fatten on them.

## BARDOU.

Noël-Edouard Bardou was born at Montpellier in 1808. Becoming in 1826 a lawyer's clerk in the office of his elder brother, he amused himself during his leisure hours by reciting tragedy, which he did so funnily that his comrades with one accord pronounced him an excellent *comie* actor. Their applause and his own love of the stage induced him to bid adieu to the law, and we find him soon after forming part of a strolling company at that time proceeding on a tour through the south of France, and playing with great zeal tyrants, lovers, buffoons, walking gentlemen, old and even at a pinch young women. Unfortunately, though the work was hard, the pay was small, and he was forced to play all the different parts in two or three old costumes, carefully patched and darned, it is true, but not the less threadbare. However, matters improved at last, and he performed for ten years in larger theatres, such as those of Montpellier, Brest, Toulouse, and Antwerp, playing not only vaudeville, but drama, and even occasionally opera.

We do not know the precise date of Bardou's *début* at the Vaudeville, but his first original creation was in a piece called *Rigoletti*. He soon became a favourite, and the success of his earliest essays encouraged several authors of repute to profit by the ability and intelligence of the young actor, and entrust him with several important parts.

Subsequently to the destruction by fire in 1838 of the Vaudeville in

the Rue de Chartres, Bardou played for a short time at the Renaissance, but rejoined his old comrades on the opening of the new theatre on the Boulevard Bonne-Nouvelle. There he commenced a series of brilliant creations, which at once entitled him to rank among the most promising as well as most versatile performers in the capital: *le Protégé*, *l'Armée 960*, *le Frère de Piron*, and numerous other pieces, successively displayed the various resources of his flexible talent. But it was not till two years after the removal of the Vaudeville to the Place de la Bourse that the production of *les Mémoires du Diable* (in 1842) fully revealed the surprising versatility of his powers. He had hitherto had little occasion for the development of any dramatic quality, but the creation of *Jean Gauthier*, with his eloquent *oui* and *non*, words repeated by Bardou with every change and inflexion of which the human voice is capable, proved that

"Celui qui fait rire peut aussi faire pleurer."

Bardou is a stout good-humoured-looking man, with very expressive eyes and a strong southern accent, over which, nevertheless, he has sufficient command to be able to modify it, and even occasionally banish it altogether. Thus, in *l'Ami Grandet*, which is a comedy rather than a vaudeville, there is nothing in his pronunciation that bespeaks the clown, whereas in *Passé Minuit*, *les Petites Misères*, and other farces of the kind, in which a little *patois* (and the broader the better), far from appearing a defect, only heightens the fun, there is no mistaking the native of Montpellier.

Bardou has, we believe, a yearly salary of 10,000 francs, and two months' *congé*.

#### BERNARD LÉON.

This veteran actor began his Parisian career at the Gymnase on the opening of that theatre in 1820, and for some time rivalled Perlet in popularity. *Le Comédien d'Étampes*, *le Coiffeur et le Perruquier*, and indeed most of the pieces produced at that epoch, owe much of their success to his gay and flexible talent. His stay, however, on the Bou-

levard Bonne Nouvelle was but short, and he was soon after engaged at the Théâtre Feydeau, which he quitted in turn for the Vaudeville. There he acquired fresh popularity by his lively and humorous acting in *Pourquoi*, etc.; but Bernard Léon, who has evidently a spice of the Wandering Jew in his composition, was never destined to remain long in one place, and we find him in 1835 purchasing the management of the Gaité for 500,000 francs (£ 20,000). He had not been many months in his new position when the theatre was entirely destroyed by fire, and though he contrived to weather the storm for a time, he was eventually compelled to surrender the directorship to more experienced hands. Since then, Bernard Léon has been by turns engaged at the Palais Royal, the Gymnase, and the Vaudeville, where he still is, and where, we hope, contrary to his usual habits, he will contrive to remain. Though no longer young, he is as gay and jovial as ever: he has still the same funny face, the same comical rolling of the eye, the same hearty laugh, and the same stout little figure as in his best days, and were it not for an occasional thickness of speech and difficulty of utterance, one would say that Time had indeed dealt lightly with Bernard Léon.

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#### CAMIADE.

Some twenty-five years ago this actor was the idol of the *habitués* of the Panorama Dramatique, a gay and fascinating *jeune premier*. He is now

"Eheu: quantum mutatus ab illo:"

reduced to play the *utilités* at the Vaudeville.

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#### DESBIRONS.

A *jeune premier* with an agreeable *physique*, some talent, and plenty of *bonne volonté*.

## FÉLIX.

This clever and estimable actor (whose family name is, we believe, Cellier) was born in 1811. At the age of sixteen he commenced his dramatic career at Montmartre and Belleville, and soon became such a favourite with the inhabitants of the *Banlieue*, that his rising reputation attracted the notice of a dramatic agent in Paris, on the look out for recruits for the Rouen theatre. Now Rouen, of all places in the world, is the very last that nine out of ten *débütants* would venture to appear at, the critics of Normandy being proverbial for their severity; but Félix, confident in his own ability, had made up his mind that he would succeed, *coûte qui coûte*, and succeed he did. However, the manager, entertaining some misgivings as to the young actor's real merits, declined engaging him, and our hero forthwith transferred his services to the theatre at Bordeaux, where he was rapidly working his way into public favour when he was suddenly recalled to Rouen, the utter discomfiture of all his successors having rendered his engagement a matter not of policy alone, but of absolute necessity.

After five years' stay in Rouen, Félix was summoned to Paris by M. Trubert, at that time director of the Vaudeville, to supply the place of Lafont, who had just quitted the theatre. He made his *début* July 13, 1840, as *Durosot* in Paul de Kock's *Jolie Fille du Faubourg*, and the success of the piece was chiefly attributable to his lively and natural acting.

Six years have elapsed since that evening, and during the entire period Félix has remained constant to the Vaudeville, which indeed could ill afford to lose him. Noble and dignified in drama, well bred and witty in comedy, and irresistibly amusing in farce, he has displayed in his various creations a versatility of talent which his predecessor Lafont never possessed in so great a degree. He has shown himself equal to Volnys as the *Duc de Chevreuse* in *Un Duel sous Richelieu*, and certainly not inferior to Lafont in *Pierre le Rouge*. But it is in his own *répertoire* that Félix is seen to the greatest advantage; and we would particularly instance three of his creations as rivalling each other in excellence. These are *Robin* in *les Mémoires du Diable*, *Bonarrichon* in *Marguerite*, and *Stanislas* in *la Polka en Province*. In



the first, he has given eminent proof as well of superior intelligence as of dramatic power; never was character more attentively studied or more artistically delineated. In it he has not only the look and manner, but the spirit and feeling of a gentleman, gay and gallant it is true, but not the less frank, honourable, and sincere (1). As for his *Bourrichon*, it is the most delicious bit of conceited impudence and assurance imaginable; his self-satisfied coxcombry, his affected indifference to everything that passes beyond the limits of the fashionable world (which limits are bounded at one end by the Rue de Varennes, and on the other by the Rue St. Lazare), and his most ludicrous alarm at the very mention of the odious name of *Bourrichon*, are as indescribable as they are inimitable, and must be seen in order to be appreciated. Nor is his *Stanislas* less perfect in its way; had Félix lived all his life in the Quartier Latin, he could not have produced a more faithful copy of the Parisian student: every particularity of dress and manner, even down to the pipe in its *malle* and the smoking cap, not forgetting the roguish twinkle of his eye and the flourish of his cane, is hit off to a nicety (2).

Félix has a clear musical voice, and sings with considerable taste: his eyes are very expressive, and he is altogether a *beau garçon*, at least, so the ladies say, and from their judgment there is no appeal. That he is as *bon* as he is *beau* is, we believe, acknowledged by all who know him.

Early in the present year (1846) he played for some time with M<sup>me</sup> Doche at the St. James's Theatre, and, if we may judge from his enthusiastic reception by Mr. Nitchell's *habitues*, we should say that this his first visit to England is not likely to be his last.

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(1) One of our own newspaper critics has ably described Félix in his favourite character of *Robin* as "one of the most easy, agreeable, and elegant of actors, with force and passion at command, as well as gaiety and grace. It is a treat (says the same writer) to see him bow and smile, and hear him utter compliments or sarcasms with the tact and address of a polished gentleman: we have nothing so refined, nothing so genial on the English stage."

(2) M. Paul de Kock may thank Félix for having, by his humorous performance of *Bourrichon*, recently saved in *Place Vendôme* from the *chute* it richly merited.

## FUCHS.

A tolerable *amoureux*, formerly at the Porte Saint Martin.

## HIPPOLYTE.

*Régisseur* of the theatre, and consequently the spokesman in all cases when the indulgence of the public is requested on account of sudden indisposition or change of performance. Hippolyte once played the young lovers at the Porte Saint Martin with some success, and now plays young and old parts indiscriminately at the Vaudeville. He has sufficient talent to escape being hissed, but is seldom applauded; we say seldom, because we recollect that once, during a performance of *le Cabaret de Lustucru*, some well-meaning but indiscreet friend clapped him most enthusiastically at the conclusion of every *couplet* he had to sing; a species of homage which Hippolyte, to do him justice, appeared as well as the audience utterly at a loss to comprehend.

Nevertheless, in spite of an ungainly stiffness of manner, and a naturally harsh voice, he is a very useful and painstaking actor, and has contributed (modestly, it is true, but not the less efficiently) to the success of more than one piece in the *répertoire* of the Vaudeville.

## JUCIER.

First appeared at the Vaudeville in September, 1845, as the *Duc de Chevreuse* in *Un Duel sous Richelieu*, a character played by him with deep feeling and pathos. We are much mistaken if Jucier (to use an expressive French term) does not *faire son chemin*.

## LECLÈRE.

Born at Reims, in Champagne, in 1803. He became an actor con-

trary to the wish of his father, who was himself on the stage, and commenced his career by singing in the chorusses and playing *bouts de rôles* at Lille, Amiens, Metz, Strasbourg, and Toulouse.

In 1828, he went to Rouen, and (with the exception of a flying visit to Paris in 1835, on which occasion he made a successful *début* at the Vaudeville, and was actually engaged there, but preferred returning to Rouen) remained there in the enjoyment of considerable popularity until 1841. He then seriously accepted an engagement offered him by M. Trubert, at that time manager of the Vaudeville, but had few opportunities of justifying his provincial reputation until the production of *l'Homme Blasé* in 1843, in which piece he originally sustained the part of *Ravinard* to the entire satisfaction of the author (M. Duvert), who told him after the first representation that he had made that evening a *pas de géant* in public favour.

This was the first of a long series of successful creations, which have rendered Leclère one of the most deservedly popular actors in Paris. *Balandin* in *la Polka en Province*, *Grasbleu* in *les Trois Loges*, *la Rancune* in *le Roman Comique*, and above all *Vergaville* in *Riche d'Amour*, in which piece he has even been placed by some critics on a level with Arnal himself, are among his happiest efforts. Nor is his talent confined to any one peculiar line of acting : his versatility is perfectly Protean, and be the part entrusted to him serious or comic, dramatic or burlesque, he is equally at home in it. During a temporary absence of Bardou he has played *Jean Gauthier* in *les Mémoires du Diable* in a very effective manner, and we ourselves have seen him perform four characters in no one point resembling each other on the same evening. His by-play is admirably expressive, and no actor possesses in greater perfection the art of keeping alive the attention and curiosity of the audience without uttering a single word. He sings with point and humour, and there is a jovial heartiness in his laugh which is as communicative as it is exhilarating : his face, figure, voice, and manner are indeed naturally comic, though he can adapt them at will to the sternness and gravity befitting drama.

Leclère is not the only one of his family whose professional talents deserve honourable mention ; his daughter, M<sup>lle</sup> Augustine Leclère, is an agreeable singer, and promises at some future day to be an ornament to the Opéra Comique.

A young actor, who only wants confidence and practice to become a favourite with the public. He is very droll as *Valentin* in *les Mémoires du Diabte*, and as the hungry servant in *Quand l'Amour s'en va*, for which last character in particular his tall and thin figure especially qualifies him. His extreme slimness was alluded to in the prologue produced on the re-opening of the theatre in September, 1845, under the title of *le Français né malin*.

In it *l'Ennui*, furious at being expelled from the Vaudeville, menaced the whole company with various calamities, and concluded by saying,

"*Je vous ferai tous maigrir!*"

"*Tous!*" cried Ludovic with a smile of incredulity. "*Je vous en défie!*"

"*Eh bien!*" replied *l'Ennui*, suddenly changing his plan of attack after one glance at the meagre proportions of the worthy *sous-régisseur*, for such is Ludovic behind the scenes: — "*Eh bien! mon garçon, je t'engraisserai.*"

We feel bound to add that *l'Ennui* has not yet carried his threat into execution (1).

#### MONTALAND.

One of the new recruits engaged by M. Cogniard on his becoming manager of the Vaudeville. He first appeared as *the Count* in the *Diable à Quatre*, and continued his *débuts* as *Léonard* in *Carlo Beati*.

His acting is spirited and not ungraceful, and he bids fair with study to become an efficient *jume premier*.

(1) Since the above was written Ludovic has retired from the stage, resigning his post of *sous-régisseur* to Camille.

## MUNIÉ.

Brother-in-law of Ravel, the excellent comic actor of the Palais Royal. In 1843, he created a sentimental part in *l'Ertase*, which obtained a *succès de larmes*, and attracted towards him the notice both of the press and the public: unfortunately in each of his subsequent creations he has done little more than reproduce a very feeble copy of his first essay.

Munié is short and slight, his voice is pleasing though rather *lar-moyant*, and his manners are far from inelegant: his principal defect is a monotonous style of declamation which involuntarily reminds one of a schoolboy reciting a speech out of Homer or Sallust on examination day. His recent creation, however, of *Werther* in *Charlotte* is a very decided improvement on any of his former efforts.

## PIERRON (Eugène).

Formerly played at the Odéon and Gymnase. He made a moderately successful *début* at the Vaudeville, January 15, 1846, as *Harteigh* in *Elle est folle*, Laferrière's admirable personation of which character has rendered it almost unapproachable for any other actor (1). Pierron has a tolerably pleasing voice, and treads the stage with ease and confidence, but he wants the impetuous energy and earnestness of feeling which so remarkably distinguished his predecessor. He has, moreover, an ugly habit of rolling his eyes and contracting his brows into a frown, which greatly detracts from the otherwise agreeable and intelligent expression of his countenance. Off the stage, Pierron is extremely good-looking, we might almost say handsome.

(1) Adolphe Laferrière's first *début* as an actor took place in a *Bonlieux* theatre, and he subsequently played at the Ambigu, the Français, the Odéon, and the Gaîté, and finally, in 1846, became a member of the Vaudeville. There his best creations were in *Marguerite*, *Nadine Roland*, *Loïsa*, and *Pierre le Millionnaire*, in each of which pieces he displayed a degree of energy and feeling which the *jeunes premiers* who have succeeded him are far from possessing.

Laferrière has also another decided advantage over most of his contemporaries, inasmuch as he is naturally endowed with a handsome and intelligent countenance, a good voice, and an unembarrassed and gentlemanly manner.

## SOREL.

An amusing low comedian, who first made acquaintance with a Vaudeville audience in an execrable piece called *Suzette et Suzon*, produced in September, 1845. He is extremely droll in burlesque, where his natural tendency to over-act his parts is rather a merit than a defect, but is quite out of his element in comedy.

## TÉTARD.

A very promising young comic actor, who, after becoming a favourite with the *habités* of the Théâtre Beaumarchais and the Délassements Comiques, made a successful *début* at the Vaudeville, November 8, 1845, as *Carottin* in *la Grande Bourse et les Petites Bourses*. He has since created among other parts *André* in *les Fleurs Animées*, and *Maronard* in *la Place Ventadour*. Tétard is short and slightly made, with a plain but intelligent countenance and plenty of liveliness and *aplomb*. He is moreover an artist in more senses than one, being the author of a variety of little *statuettes* representing the principal Parisian actors, many of which are admirable though burlesque likenesses.

ALBERT (M<sup>me</sup>).

This admirable actress is not the first of her family who has acquired a celebrity in theatrical annals, her grandmother, M<sup>me</sup> Cressant, having been for some time the successful rival of M<sup>me</sup> Dugazon (1). It was indeed under her auspices that our heroine first trod the stage when only four years old. This *début* took place at Montpellier under the following circumstances; M<sup>me</sup> Cressant, who was announced in the bills one evening during the Carnival to play the part of an old woman

(1) Priet, the ex-actor of the Gymnase, is a connection of M<sup>me</sup> Albert, as was also Monrose, whose death has left so sad a void in the personnel of the Théâtre Français.



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in a piece called *le Roi de Cocagne*, took it into her head to dress up her little grandchild *en daigneur*, and send her on the stage as a substitute for herself. M<sup>me</sup> Albert (then M<sup>lle</sup> Thérèse Vernet) consented, but only on one condition, namely that a certain dancing doll, which was also advertised to perform sundry evolutions on the very evening of her own *début*, should become her legitimate property.

This being agreed to, the diminutive *grand-maman* went through her part with so much spirit as to excite general enthusiasm, and, as soon as her task was fairly accomplished, demanded her promised reward. The doll, however, being at that moment busily engaged in executing a minuet to the great satisfaction of the audience, poor Thérèse's request was wholly unattended to; and this so enraged her, that she ran on the stage, spied out the object of her search, and screamed out as loud as she could: "Make haste, Mademoiselle, I have finished my part, and am waiting for you." This unexpected incident greatly amused the public, who, on hearing the rights of the case, insisted on the doll's being forthwith given up to *la petite grand-maman*.

From Montpellier, M<sup>lle</sup> Vernet accompanied her grandmother to Perpignan and Nîmes, playing in *les Petits Savoyards* and several other pieces with remarkable success. At the age of fifteen, her fine soprano voice and great musical proficiency procured her an engagement at Toulouse, where she made a most brilliant *début* as *Zéline* in *la Caravane*. Luckily for her, the principal vocalist of the theatre, M<sup>me</sup> Mercier, instead of thwarting her progress, gave her every encouragement, and bestowed on her much valuable instruction. They were singing together one evening when a wreath fell at their feet, half-composed of rosebuds, and half of the same flowers but full-blown. M<sup>me</sup> Mercier understood the donor's meaning, and, dividing the chaplet, gave the buds to her youthful rival amid the applause of the delighted audience.

From Toulouse M<sup>lle</sup> Vernet went to Bordeaux, where she became M<sup>me</sup> Albert by her marriage with a young actor of that city, whose real name was Rodrigues. Her first appearance in Paris was at the Odéon, where she sang in *Robin des Bois* and *Richard Cœur-de-Lion*, and was ere long engaged by the manager of the Nouveautés, at which theatre she remained four years. There the versatility of her talent enabled

her to assume every variety of character with perfect success, and it would be difficult to say whether she was most applauded in *la Poitrineuse* as *Isaure*, or as *Marguerite* in *Faust*, on the first representation of which latter piece, while glancing at *Méphistophélès*, she was seized with a sudden nervous trembling, and uttered an involuntary "Ah!" the tone of which made her audience shudder. This "Ah!" was much talked of in the newspapers of the time, and, as has been remarked by some of her biographers, did more for her reputation than years of study would have done.

From the Nouveautés M<sup>me</sup> Albert went to the Vaudeville, where her varied and brilliant qualities shone forth in their brightest lustre; exchanging the pathos and sensibility displayed by her in *Arthur* for the lively and frolicsome gaiety of *Georgette*, she again appeared in a new light as the famous *dansseuse* La Camargo, which character was sustained by her with a grace and elegance hardly inferior, perhaps, to that of her illustrious prototype. M<sup>me</sup> Albert has more than once proved herself the possessor of a ready wit, which, on occasion, served her in good stead: she was playing *M<sup>me</sup> Dubarry* at the Vaudeville, and, in accordance with the costume of the period, wore a pair of very high-heeled shoes. Running hastily on the stage, over which a carpet had been spread without being properly attached, her foot caught in one of the corners, and she slipped down. The audience burst into a general laugh; but their merriment was succeeded by the most rapturous applause when M<sup>me</sup> Albert, rising nimbly to her feet, exclaimed gaily: "Every one has his turn, Gentlemen; it is mine to-day, and it may be yours to-morrow."

Some of the best pieces of the *répertoire* of this theatre, and among others *l'Ami Grandet*, *Une Dame de l'Empire*, and *Un Duel sous Richelieu*, owe their celebrity entirely to M<sup>me</sup> Albert, whose secession from the company after the destruction by fire of the theatre in the Rue de Chartres occasioned a vacuum in the *troupe* which no effort on the part of the management could fill up. We next find her at the Renaissance, where she had barely the time to create *Diane de Chivry* with her accustomed talent when that theatre was abruptly closed, and then began that long provincial tour which for several years deprived the Parisian stage of one of its best and most admired actresses. The

motive for this self-exile appears to have been her wish to spare her husband (who was then engaged in a subordinate capacity at the Théâtre Français, and who was seldom spoken of in other terms than as "the husband of M<sup>me</sup> Albert of the Vaudeville,") the mortification of seeing his own efforts completely cast into the shade by those of his wife; and it was with the view of associating him in future with her own successes that she determined on refusing every proposal made to her by the different managers of the capital, a task she persevered in until the death of Rodrigues enabled her to return without compunction to Paris, where her place had long been empty.

Shortly before M. Ancelot resigned the directorial reins to M. Coignard, M<sup>me</sup> Albert was temporarily engaged, and played several of her favourite characters; but it is only recently that she has become a permanent member of the company. Her *reentrée* took place June 6, 1846, as *Amélie* in *le Gant et l'Eventail*, and she has since created *la Nouvelle Héloïse* as well as *Charlotte* in the drama of that name with great effect.

M<sup>me</sup> Albert is indisputably the most accomplished actress of her day, a title which she has fairly earned as well by the versatility as by the excellence of her talent. In comedy she is equal to M<sup>lle</sup> Plessy, in vaudeville she has proved herself a match for Déjazet, and in domestic drama she is unrivalled. Her laugh is the most joyous and communicative that ever rang within the walls of a theatre, and her pathos is so real, so truly heart-rending, as to draw tears from the most stoical listener (1). As a singer of ballads and *chansonnettes* M<sup>me</sup> Albert stands alone: she not only possesses a rich and musical voice, but she manages it with such exquisite skill and taste as to render her execution of even the simplest couplet a most delicious vocal treat. In short, whatever she attempts, the result is always the same... perfection. How then can we wonder at her immense popularity, a popularity which Time, far from diminishing, only tends to increase? Years have elapsed since her youthful graces first found favour in the eyes of a Parisian public, and that favour has never yet been withdrawn from her. Nor has that lapse of years altered the marble smoothness of her brow, or dimmed the

(1) We have more than once seen M<sup>me</sup> Albert's eyes filled with tears when under the influence of strong emotion.

brightness of her eye : the interval between the spring and summer of a woman's life has passed away without either robbing her countenance of its pleasing and intelligent expression, or her figure of its lightness and elasticity.

M<sup>me</sup> Albert's reputation is not confined to France alone : in England, in Germany, in Switzerland, wherever in short she has left a *souvenir* of her charming talent, her name is always cited as one of those who not more by their brilliant natural gifts than by their private worth have become ornaments of the profession to which they belong, and who, while they can fairly claim universal admiration, are not the less entitled to universal respect. (1).

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#### ANALIS (M<sup>lle</sup>).

M<sup>lle</sup> Anais Sauzion is an actress of very moderate pretensions, whose career at the Vaudeville dates from November 29, 1845, the character selected for her *début* having been that of *Anna* in *Trop Heureuse*. She is, however, painstaking and industrious, and deserves encouragement.

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#### BEAUCHÊNE (M<sup>lle</sup> ATALA).

This actress, who was born May 8, 1817, commenced, we believe, her dramatic career at M. Comte's Theatre in the Passage Choiseul. In 1833, she was one of the most promising *ingénues* of the Vaudeville, and was subsequently engaged at the Variétés, where she played among other characters *Anne Danby* to Frédéric Lemaitre's *Kean*. She then succeeded M<sup>me</sup> Cuzent at the Cirque Olympique, and after displaying her handsome face and majestic figure to great advantage in *Murat* and other battle pieces, returned to the Vaudeville in June 1844, as *la Du-*

(1) M<sup>me</sup> Albert has recently become M<sup>me</sup> Bignon, by her marriage with the actor of that name.

chesse in *Un Mystère*, a gloomy and ineffective drama, more befitting the Boulevard du Temple than the favourite theatre of *le Français né malin*.

M<sup>lle</sup> Atala Beauchêne is a tall stately woman, with fine eyes, and an agreeable voice : she treads the stage with remarkable ease and dignity, and possesses a sufficiently versatile talent to enable her to personate the *grande dame* and the *grisette* with equal success.

#### BERTHAULT (M<sup>lle</sup>).

After having been first singer successively at Amsterdam, Lyons, Rouen, and Brussels, M<sup>lle</sup> Berthault came to Paris, and was for five years attached to the Opéra Comique. She then played for four years at the Odéon, where she created parts in *le Voyage à Pontoise*, *la Famille Cochois*, etc., and finally made a successful *début* at the Vaudeville December 30, 1845, as *Emma* in *Quand l'Amour s'en va*. She is an exceedingly agreeable without being a pretty actress ; her manners are very lady-like, and she has a tolerably flexible but rather thin voice, which she manages with considerable taste (1).

#### CASTELLAN (M<sup>lle</sup>).

This lady was a member of the Vaudeville company some three or four years ago, and after a temporary retirement from the stage made her *reentrée* February 26, 1846, as *Mercur* in *les Dieux de l'Olympe à Paris*. She has a lively and extremely *piquant* face, a vast fund of animal spirits, and a neat and graceful little figure, which, like that of M<sup>lle</sup> Déjazet, appears to great advantage in a male costume. Her voice is weak, but she articulates with great distinctness and sings agreeably. In *les Fleurs Animées*, M<sup>lle</sup> Castellan plays *la Belle de Nuit* with admirable vivacity.

(1) M<sup>lle</sup> Berthault has lately married M. Bock, the sub-leader of the Vaudeville orchestra.

CÉLESTINE (M<sup>lle</sup>).

M<sup>lle</sup> Célestine succeeded M<sup>lle</sup> Liévenne early in April, 1846, as *Vénus* in *les Dieux de l'Olympe à Paris*. Her chief merit (if merit it can be called) consists in her being at least half a head taller than any other actress in the company.

DAUBRUN (M<sup>lle</sup> MARIE).

Made a very modest *début* July 19, 1846, as M<sup>lle</sup> Lange in the piece of that name. M<sup>lle</sup> Daubrun (or d'Aubrun)'s figure is short but symmetrical, and her face, though not positively pretty, is far from plain. Her movements are as yet deficient in grace, and her style of acting is rather too characteristic of the *Banlieue*; but she possesses a germ of natural talent which only stands in need of cultivation. Her worst defect is a husky voice, which, though it might escape notice in drama, will always be a stumbling block in her way at a vaudeville theatre.

DOCHE (M<sup>me</sup>).

M<sup>me</sup> Marie Charlotte Eugénie Plunkett was born at Brussels, November 4, 1823. After having received an excellent education at a *pension* in Paris (1), to which city she was brought by her mother when hardly five years old, she made her first appearance on any stage at Versailles in October, 1837, under the name of M<sup>me</sup> Eugénie Fleury (2), as *Juliette* in *Moiroud et Compagnie*, and met with the most flattering reception. So decided, indeed, was her success, that it procured her an immediate engagement at the Vaudeville, at that time in the Rue de

(1) We believe that she received some vocal instruction from Alexis Dupont, formerly of the Académie Royale.

(2) The name of Fleury was also adopted by her brother, who was for some time engaged at the Vaudeville.



Le 13-juin 17

L. Poché

Chartres, under the management of M. Etienne Arago. There she made a brilliant *début* January 8, 1838, as *Suzette* in *Renaudin de Caen*, and shortly after created her first original part, that of *Stella* in *le Serment de Collège* (1).

On the destruction of the Vaudeville by fire in the summer of 1838, M<sup>lle</sup> Fleury together with part of the company visited successively Abbeville, Châlons, Soissons, and other provincial towns (2), until the temporary installation of the *troupe* in what had hitherto been a *Café-Spectacle* on the Boulevard Bonne Nouvelle recalled her to Paris. Soon after her return, in January, 1839, she married M. Doche, *chef d'orchestre* of the Vaudeville, and the first part created by her as M<sup>me</sup> Doche was that of *Ernestine* in *le Plastron*, a piece which, thanks to her *gentillesse* and to Arnal's humorous acting, enjoyed a long and successful career.

As yet, the characters confided to the charming *ingénue* had been comparatively unimportant; but her position was considerably improved by the departure of her *chef d'emploi*, M<sup>lle</sup> Louise Mayer, who quitted the Vaudeville for the Variétés, leaving her entire *répertoire* to her young and pretty rival. M<sup>me</sup> Doche appeared by turns in *le Démon de la Nuit* (3), *les Gants Jaunes*, *le Cabaret de Lustucru*, *le Tourlourou*, *le Poltron*, *Trop Heureuse*, and many other admirable pieces, which, together with her original creations in *le Protégé*, *le Père Pascal*, etc., displayed her pleasing and varied talents to the greatest advantage.

In May, 1840, the Vaudeville was transferred to its present quarters in the Place de la Bourse, and it is from that epoch that M<sup>me</sup> Doche's reputation as an actress may be said to have fairly begun. She had already proved herself, to the entire satisfaction both of the press and the public, one of the best *ingénues* in Paris; it now remained for her to claim the rank of a *premier sujet* by showing the remarkable versatility of

(1) A journal of the time, speaking of her subsequent creation of *Elisabeth* in *les Industries forcées*, says: "Une jeune débutante, M<sup>lle</sup> Fleury, jolie comme un amour de Bocher, a joué dans cette pièce de manière à fonder sur son avenir de grandes espérances."

(2) At a later period of her career (in July, 1844) M<sup>me</sup> Doche created a perfect *farceur* at Rouen, her success at the Théâtre Français in that city equalling, if it did not surpass, that of the most popular of the many Parisian "stars" who had preceded her.

(3) In this piece M<sup>me</sup> Doche has completely eclipsed both her predecessors, M<sup>lle</sup> Farouill and M<sup>me</sup> Talmy.



her powers. *Gentille* and lively as *Anandine* in *la Jolie Fille du Fauxbourg*, and as *Clotilde* in *la Grisette et l'Héritière*, she was equally at home as the fond yet suffering wife in M<sup>me</sup> Aucelet's delightful comedy of *Marguerite*, and as the modest artless *Ernestine* in *l'Ingénue de Paris*. But her crowning triumph, the entire fulfilment of the promise held forth at her *début*, was yet to come; in March, 1842, appeared the famous *Mémoires du Diable*, indisputably the gem of the Vaudeville *répertoire*. For months after the first production of this piece, nothing was talked of but the *verve* of Félix and the bewitching *naïveté* of M<sup>me</sup> Doche, and her singing of

"Vilà, vilà,  
Ce que votre lullin vous dira,"

and

"Sonnez, sonnez, et mon mari viendra."

is still fresh in the memory of every Paris play-goer (1).

Early in 1843 *l'Exase* was produced, a dull uninteresting drama, which the beauty of M<sup>me</sup> Doche alone saved from summary condemnation; this was followed by another pretty little comedy by M<sup>me</sup> Aucelet, *Lotsa*, in which our heroine sustained the character of a young peasant girl with the most touching simplicity and grace. In the same year she paid a visit to London, where she was received with the greatest favour, and on her return to Paris created successively *Mme Barbe-Bleue* and *Mme Roland* in the two pieces so called, as well as *Louise* in *l'Homme Blasé*.

In April, 1844, we witnessed the first representation of *la Polka en Province*, and from the commencement of the overture (the original Polka) to the fall of the curtain, we never remember a more uninter-

(1) Up to the end of 1843, M<sup>me</sup> Doche's original creations amounted in number to thirty-four, the most important among them, besides those already mentioned, being *Ernestine* in *les Maris Vengés*, *Nizza* in *Belisario*, *Jeanne* in *Rouane* in *Bonheur et Malheur*, *Raymond* in *les Pages et les Poissardes*, *Suzanne* in *la Belle Tourneuse*, *Zizine* in the piece of that name, *Juliette* in *la Journée d'une Jolie Femme*, and *Bernance* in *le Magasin de la Graine de Lin*. Subsequently to that period she has created, as well at the Gymnase as at the Vaudeville, twenty-five additional parts, making a total since her first *début* of fifty-nine. It is worthy of remark that no piece in which she has sustained a principal character has ever failed, and more than one has become unusually popular: *les Mémoires du Diable*, *la Polka en Province*, and *Marguerite*, for instance, have each been played above a hundred times, and *l'Image*, thanks to her graceful personation of *Modestine*, may fairly be considered as one of the most successful novellées produced by Mr. Mitchell at the St. James's Theatre during the season of 1846.

rupted and decided *succès*. The dance was not then, as now, *passé de mode*, but new and comparatively unknown (1); and the admirable manner in which it was executed by M<sup>me</sup> Doche and Félix (their instructor having been Berthier, the clever dancer of the Porte Saint Martin) excited the most enthusiastic applause (2).

After an interval of two or three months, during which M<sup>me</sup> Doche paid a professional visit to her native city, Brussels, where each of her performances at the Théâtre du Parc was a triumph, and where it was truly said of her that "*elle est assez jolie pour pouvoir se passer de talent, elle a assez de talent pour pouvoir se passer d'être jolie*," appeared *Satan, ou le Diable à Paris*, a piece with which the English public have been made familiar, as well by the run it enjoyed during the foregoing season at the St James's Theatre, as by an adaptation produced two years ago at the Adelphi (3). Here, more perhaps than in all her other creations, M<sup>me</sup> Doche's versatility was strikingly manifested: it would indeed be difficult to imagine anything more true and lifelike than her personation of the six different characters entrusted to her. In January, 1845, she played for the first time *Colombe* in *les Trois Loges*, a piece wholly indebted to her and Bardou for its success, and in the following April quitted the Vaudeville for the Gymnase, where she was engaged by M. Montigny at the large annual salary of 20,000 francs, and made her *début* there April 17, for the benefit of Numa, as *Madeleine* in *l'Image*, one of Scribe's most delightful productions; the concluding couplet of which, sung by M<sup>me</sup> Doche herself, was so peculiarly appropriate to the occasion that we cannot resist the pleasure of quoting it.

"Lorsque, voyageuse étrangère,  
J'arrive en de nouveaux climats,  
Un seul espoir, peut-être téméraire,  
Auprès de vous a guidé mes pas.

(1) We recollect being present at the *Bal des Artistes Dramatiques*, in 1844, and sharing in the lively curiosity of the assembly in general to see one couple dance the Polka, then in its infancy.

(2) We had the pleasure a few nights ago of witnessing this most amusing piece for the twenty-second time, on which occasion its revival was hailed with general satisfaction by a crowded house.

(3) M<sup>me</sup> Cécile's personation of *Satan*, or the *Mysterious Stranger*, as the English version is termed, is exceedingly clever and spirited, but it lacks the peculiar grace and fascination with which M<sup>me</sup> Doche has invested the part.

Où, j'ai rêvé votre suffrage,  
Et les braves de l'hospitalité;  
Messieurs, applaudissez l'image,  
Et je vais croire à la réalité.

Piece and actress were very favourably received; but in spite of her exquisite performance of *Caroline* in *la Seconde Année*, *Cécile* in *la Somnambule*, *Adelaide* in *la Vie en Partie Double*, etc., M<sup>me</sup> Doche was never in her element at the Gymnase, and it would puzzle us to say whether the manager of the Vaudeville or its numerous aristocratic *habitues* were the most delighted at her reappearance in the Salle de la Bourse towards the close of November, 1845, as *Colombe* in *les Trois Loges* (1). Since her return she has created among other characters *Mathilde* in *le Gant et l'Éventail*, and *la Pensée* in *les Fleurs Animées*: her delicious *costume de bal* in the former piece will be long remembered as a model of elegance (2), while by her personal charms she more than justified the title of the latter (3).

M<sup>me</sup> Doche is not only one of the most pleasing and most accomplished actresses, but also one of the prettiest women that have ever adorned the French stage. Her eyes are of the softest blue, and full of intelligence and expression, her complexion is fair and delicate, and the silky luxuriance of her *blonds cheveux* has become proverbial. Her voice both in speaking and singing is extremely clear and melodious, her figure is slight and elegant, and she treads the stage with most perfect grace and distinction.

#### DURAND (M<sup>lle</sup>).

M<sup>lle</sup> Fanny Durand first appeared at the Vaudeville in April, 1845, as *Toinette* in *Madame Bugolin*. She has rather a pretty face, and is

(1) The cause of her secession from the Gymnase was her very natural refusal to *doubler* M<sup>lle</sup> Desirée, in *Noémie*, during a temporary indisposition of that actress.

(2) M<sup>me</sup> Doche and M<sup>lle</sup> Déjazet are unquestionably the best dressers on the French stage.

(3) *Fanchon* in *les Chansons Populaires de la France* is one of M<sup>me</sup> Doche's latest and most successful creations. The piece itself possesses little intrinsic merit, but is rendered attractive by her delightful acting.

altogether a *gentille* young actress when she does not attempt to speak or sing, but as soon as she opens her mouth the charm is broken. Nothing can be more monotonous or more inanimate than her delivery, and there is an awkward embarrassment in her manner, especially when she sings, which, whether it be the effect of timidity or of natural *gaucherie*, is equally ungraceful and disagreeable.

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#### FRANTZ (M<sup>lle</sup>).

After playing one of the fairies in *la Biche au Bois* at the Porte Saint Martin for some hundred nights, M<sup>lle</sup> Appoline Frantz quitted M. Théodore Cogniard's theatre for that of his brother, M. Hippolyte, and made her *début* at the Vaudeville November 8, 1845, as *Françoise* in *la Grande Bourse et les Petites Bourses*. She has an intelligent open countenance, and a tolerably fresh complexion, which renders her better looking *en ville* than on the stage. She plays the *soubrettes* with perfect *aplomb* and great spirit, and, were her voice a little less shrill and sharp, would be a very pleasing as well as promising actress.

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#### GÉRALDINE (M<sup>lle</sup>).

A better singer than actress, who first appeared at the Vaudeville August 24, 1846, as *la Chanson* in *les Chansons Populaires de la France*.

M<sup>lle</sup> Géraldine's eyes rather resemble those of M<sup>lle</sup> Saint Marc, but she wants the grace and *gentillesse* of that accomplished *artiste*. Her voice is tolerably sweet, and not deficient in power; we would, however, recommend her to take a lesson from M<sup>me</sup> Doche in the art of keeping her hands and arms quiet while she sings.

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#### GUILLEMIN (M<sup>me</sup>).

Daughter of Mengozzi, an actor and composer belonging to the Ita-

lian company, whose performances were stopped by the Revolution of '89. On Napoleon's becoming consul, Mengozzi was made professor of singing at the Conservatoire. M<sup>me</sup> Mengozzi, mother of our heroine, besides being gifted with an excellent voice, was also an actress of some celebrity at the Variétés. At twelve years old, M<sup>lle</sup> Mengozzi was one of Dazincourt's best pupils, and at thirteen she made a successful *début* in *l'Épreuve Nouvelle*, the elegance and intelligence displayed by her on that occasion being spoken of in high terms of commendation by the critic Geoffroy. She was then entrusted by Picard with a part in his comedy of *les Filles à Marier*, and in about a year after her first *début* joined a company on the point of starting for Italy by order of Murat, one of the first acts of whose sovereignty was the establishment of a French theatre at Naples.

There M<sup>lle</sup> Mengozzi played the *ingénuités*, her usual *amoureux* being a good-looking actor of the name of Guillemain, whom she very naturally fell in love with and eventually married. The young couple remained five years at Naples, and subsequently went to Milan, where M<sup>lle</sup> Raucourt then was; and it was at the Scala that M<sup>me</sup> Guillemain first abandoned comedy for vaudeville. Husband and wife were afterwards engaged at Lyons, and coming to Paris in 1819, they both appeared at the Vaudeville with success (1), M<sup>me</sup> Guillemain resolving, though still in the bloom of youth, to devote herself to a line of parts few actresses undertake until they are obliged to do so, the old women. She had a formidable rival in her *chef d'emploi*, M<sup>me</sup> Bras, then at the height of her reputation, who, regarding M<sup>me</sup> Guillemain in the light of a mere *doublure*, took possession of every new part as her right, and on an unlucky author's venturing to entrust her less fortunate comrade with an original creation, after trying prayers and threats in vain, so far forgot herself as to give him a sound box on the ear. The author coolly kissed the hand which had struck him, and M<sup>me</sup> Guillemain kept the part. Proposals were shortly made to the latter by the Théâtre Français, but the *duègnes* being already sufficiently represented there by M<sup>me</sup> Desmousseaux and M<sup>me</sup> Hervey (formerly of the Vaudeville), she

(1) Guillemain was soon after appointed *régisseur* (i. e. stage manager) of the theatre, which office he held until his death. He is said to have been a most estimable man, and died greatly regretted by all who knew him.

decided on staying where she was, and lucky it was for her that she did so, for M<sup>me</sup> Bras soon after went to Russia, and she was left in undisturbed possession of the field.

M<sup>me</sup> Guillemain is decidedly one of the best representatives of comic old women on the French stage : she is always *en scène*, has an excellent memory, and both speaks and acts with point and without exaggeration. She can be humorous without being vulgar, even in the assumption of such characters as *Lolotte* in *le Mari de la Dame de Charers*, or *la Mère Petitpré* in *Renaudin de Cœn*, in each of which pieces the authors have done their best to make her appear as ridiculous as possible.

Her choice of *outré* costumes is exquisite; she has invented more preposterously extravagant caps and bonnets than could ever have entered the imagination of the most ingenious *costumier*, and we remember seeing her once (we think in *Un Mystère*) wear a most extraordinarily shaped blue hat with what seemed to be white fir apples waving over it, the effect of which was, as Dominie Sampson would have said, "prodigious."

Besides the two creations already mentioned, we may cite as among the especial triumphs of M<sup>me</sup> Guillemain, *Madame Galouzot* in *les Trois Loges*, and *Un Monstre de Femme* (1).

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#### JULIETTE (M<sup>me</sup>).

A tall fine-looking woman, with a good figure and a handsome face. From constantly playing *grisettes* and *marchandes de modes*, she has acquired something of the air and *tournure* of both; and there is a sauciness in her brilliant eyes, and a sort of "touch me if you dare" expression in her manner perfectly in accordance with the characters she delights to represent. Her most successful creation is *Madame de Canaries*, the ex-milliner, in *l'Homme Blasé*, a part well adapted to display her peculiar qualities, and which she plays with infinite gaiety and spirit.

M<sup>lle</sup> Juliette, who was, we believe, formerly a *danseuse* at Rouen, has

(1) We have been told that M<sup>me</sup> Guillemain's salary amounts to 8,000 francs a-year.

not forgotten her ancient *métier*, if we may judge from her vigorous though rather unclassical execution of the mazurka in the burlesque of *Paris à tous les Diables* produced at the Vaudeville about a year and a half ago (1).

—

LECOMTE (M<sup>me</sup>).

One of the funniest representatives of elderly ladies on the French stage. She almost equals M<sup>me</sup> Guillemain in the selection of her *toilettes*, one glance at the incongruous display of colours she usually indulges in being sufficient to throw Victorine or Baudrand into fits.

M<sup>me</sup> Lecomte, among her other accomplishments, is profoundly versed in the mysteries of that elegant series of evolutions familiarly known by the name of the *cancan*, which she danced some two years ago in a carnival farce called *Les Gamins de Paris* with such vigour and precision that the authorities became alarmed, and the piece, being voted immoral, was suppressed. It was, however, revived in 1846, but M<sup>me</sup> Lecomte's dancing being then considered even more *chicard* than it was before, *les Gamins de Paris* were again withdrawn "by order" from the bills, in all probability never to reappear there.

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LIÉVENNE (M<sup>lle</sup> ATHÉNAÏS-PAULINE).

We hardly know whether M<sup>lle</sup> Liévenne is really attached to the Vaudeville or not, for she appears and disappears at uncertain intervals, thereby forcing her admirers to peruse the bills as regularly and as attentively as they would an almanach, if they were expecting the arrival of a comet. Since her *début* in the spring of 1844 as *Agathe* in *le Carlin de la Marquise*, she has been ever on the move; now finishing her engagement with M. Ancelot, now concluding another with

(1) *Juon* in *la place l'entour*, one of M<sup>lle</sup> Juliette's latest creations, is also one of her best.

Mr. Mitchell, and now signing a third with M. Cogniard; and all the time playing so very, very seldom, that, unless her name be actually on the *affiche*, one hardly knows whether she is in London or Paris. However, as for all we can tell she may possibly reappear some evening when she is least expected, we will not take upon ourselves the responsibility of omitting her in our enumeration of the Vaudeville company.

M<sup>lle</sup> Liévenne is a strikingly handsome woman, less perhaps on account of her face than of her figure, which is most admirably proportioned. Her hair is of a lustrous black, and streams over her magnificently shaped shoulders in great profusion; her countenance, however, notwithstanding the attraction of a pair of remarkably fine eyes, is singularly deficient in expression. She dresses well, and is seen to most advantage in parts where she has little to say or sing.

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#### LORRY (M<sup>lle</sup>).

M<sup>lle</sup> Louise Lorry was once, it is said, one of the most promising young actresses of the Théâtre Comte, in the Passage Choiseul. She was subsequently attached for some years to the Porte Saint Martin, where, among other parts, she played *la Vérité* in the famous *Revue* entitled *Aujourd'hui et dans Cent Ans*; and on M. Cogniard's assuming the management of the Vaudeville, she was engaged there, and made her *début* in the autumn of 1845, as *la Vieillesse* in *le Diable à Quatre*.

She is far from pretty, but her eyes are intelligent and expressive, and she has a neat little figure. As yet, her best creation at the Vaudeville has been *Piroïne* in *les Trois Baisers*, which she plays with considerable spirit and *naïveté* (1).

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(1) M<sup>lle</sup> Lorry has lately succeeded M<sup>lle</sup> Géraldine as *la Chanson* in *les Chansons populaires de la France*, having learnt the part (a very difficult one) in less than four hours.



MAYER (M<sup>lle</sup>).

M<sup>lle</sup> Pauline Mayer first appeared at the Vaudeville December 5, 1845, in *Heur et Malheur*. She is rather a handsome woman, with fine eyes and a good figure, but her acting and singing are so very indifferent, that if we were forced to decide between her dramatic qualities and those of M<sup>lle</sup> Liévenne, we honestly think the latter would bear away the palm.

MEZERAY (M<sup>lle</sup>).

A plain but modest-looking young *ingénue*, with a Dutch rather than a French face, whose *début* at the Vaudeville took place in November, 1845, as *Hernance* in *Riche d'Amour*.

OZY (M<sup>lle</sup>).

The earliest essays of M<sup>lle</sup> Alice Ozy took place some years ago at the Salle Chantereine, and one of those who first gave her instruction and encouragement was Bernard Léon. On her subsequently playing with him at the Batignolles theatre for a benefit, her promising talent attracted the notice of M. Leroy, then manager of the Variétés, who offered her an engagement. This Bernard Léon advised her to decline until she should have acquired more experience of the stage, and it was not till three months after that she made her *début* at the Variétés as *Agathe* in *les Enragés*. During her stay there she was seldom entrusted with a prominent part, *Louise* in the *Chevalier du Guet* being perhaps the best of her creations.

In the spring of 1845 she was engaged for four months at the Saint James's Theatre, and on August 30 of the same year appeared for the first time at the Vaudeville in the opening prologue entitled *le Français né Moïse* and the *Bal d'Ouvriers*. She has since created among other

parts *Aspasie* in *l'Île de Robinson*, *Lucienne* in *Un Mari Perdu*, and *Charlotte* in *le Gant et l'Écouteil*. M<sup>lle</sup> Ozy (Ozy, by the way, is said not to be her real name, but that of her mother) has a *piquante* and lively face, a profusion of light brown hair, and a plump little figure; she dresses well, and has some very handsome diamonds, almost as bright as her own sparkling eyes.

As an actress, M<sup>lle</sup> Ozy is most at home in those characters which give her an opportunity of indulging in smart hits and repartees, and, in a word, where she can *lancer le mot*, which she does most effectively and with perfect assurance and *sang-froid*. Her voice is extremely distinct, and she sings a *couplet* with point and archness, and no little humour.

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SANNAY (M<sup>me</sup>).

The *début* of this lady at the Vaudeville took place on the same evening and in the same piece as that of M<sup>lle</sup> Pauline Mayer, or, in other words, December 5, 1845, in *Heur et Malheur*. She is blonde, and, though far from pretty, is not positively plain; her voice, when not overstrained, is tolerably sweet, and her manners are quiet and lady-like.

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THÉNARD (M<sup>me</sup>).

In 1825, M<sup>lle</sup> Gabrielle Bousigue made a successful *début* at Nantes, the theatre of which city was at that time under her father's management. After playing there for two years she came to Paris, and appeared at the Théâtre Feydeau, where she would have been engaged, had not her marriage with M. Thénard, a provincial actor, induced her to accompany him to Versailles, where he was then playing. However, on the retirement of M<sup>lle</sup> Jenny Colon from the Vaudeville, M<sup>me</sup> Thénard was engaged to supply her place, and her first appearance in the Rue de Chartres took place September 16, 1828.

She soon distinguished herself as an excellent *ingénue*, and acquired some reputation in *la Laitière de Montfermeil*, *M<sup>me</sup> Dubarry*, *Elle est Folle*, and other pieces. In 1837, she followed her husband to Brussels, and remained there for two years, playing not only her own characters, but also those of M<sup>lle</sup> Mars, Déjazet, and even Georges. On the death of M. Thénard she returned to Paris, and in 1839, after a temporary retirement from the stage, re-appeared at the Vaudeville in her own creation of *Un Premier Amour*. Since then, we believe, she has remained constant to this theatre during its many peregrinations and changes of management.

M<sup>me</sup> Thénard has long since given up the *ingénues* for the *grandes coquettes*, in which line of parts she has few rivals, and scarcely any superior. She possesses, indeed, in an eminent degree all the necessary qualities for her very difficult *emploi*; her countenance is at once expressive and agreeable, her voice melodious and yet singularly *mordant*, and there is a quiet graceful dignity in her manner rarely met with on the stage. Her tact is equal to her talent; she has sufficient *esprit* of her own to be able to render still more effective that of her author, if he have any, and to conceal its absence, if he have none. A point entrusted to her is never lost; on the contrary, the most unmeaning phrases, the most crude and absurd ideas, acquire a semblance of value owing to her manner of interpreting them.

One of her very best personations is *la Chanoinesse de Saint-Méry* in *Marguerite*; this delightful comedy of M<sup>me</sup> Ancelot, and more especially the character played by M<sup>me</sup> Thénard, abounds in delicate touches of wit and satire, to which the exquisite  *finesse* and admirable delivery of this excellent actress impart an additional piquancy.

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#### VICTORINE (M<sup>lle</sup>).

M<sup>lle</sup> Victorine Capon is a much more agreeable actress than many of her comrades of far higher pretensions, and plays the trifling parts entrusted to her so unaffectedly, and at the same time so efficiently, as to

render it a subject of regret that she should be allowed so few opportunities of displaying her *piquant* face and *gentle* little figure.

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The following are among the best pieces in the *répertoire* of the Vau-deville.

Marguerite.  
 Loïsa.  
 Hermance.  
 Les Mémoires du Diable.  
 La Grisette et l'Héritière.  
 Une Dame de l'Empire.  
 L'Homme Blasé.  
 Renaudin de Caen.  
 Passé Minuit.  
 L'Humoriste.  
 Le Poltron.  
 Trop Heureuse.  
 La Polka en Province.  
 Le Magasin de la Graine de Lin.  
 Madame Barbe Bleue.  
 Un Monsieur et Une Dame.  
 Un Bal de Grand Monde.  
 Riche d'Amour.  
 L'Île de Robinson.  
 La Mansarde du Crime.  
 Les Gants Jaunes.  
 Le Mari de la Dame de Chœurs.  
 Le Cabaret de Lustucru.  
 La Jolie Fille du Faubourg.  
 Le Protégé.  
 Pourquoi.  
 Un Duel sous Richelieu.  
 L'Ami Grandet.  
 Les Cabinets Particuliers.

Satan.  
Les Trois Loges.  
Le Démon de la Nuit.  
Les Malheurs d'un Joli Garçon.  
Georgette.  
Pierre le Rouge.  
Le Gant et l'Éventail.  
Les Chansons Populaires de la France.



## CHAPTER VIII.

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### VARIÉTÉS.

BOULEVARD MONTMARTRE.

*Manager, M. Nestor Roqueplan (1).*

M<sup>lle</sup> Montansier, the founder of the Variétés, and one of the wittiest women of her day, was born about 1730, at Bayonne, her family name being Brunet. She left France when very young to become an actress at Guadaloupe, and on her return was appointed by Marie Antoinette manager of the Versailles theatre, those of Rouen, Havre, and Nantes being also under her control. On the departure of the court from Versailles, M<sup>lle</sup> Montansier came to Paris, and purchased the *Salle de Beaujolais* in the Palais Royal, which had been originally built for a puppet-show, the puppets appearing on the stage, and their parts being read or sung by actors behind the scenes. This theatre, after having been enlarged according to her directions by an architect named Louis, opened at Easter, 1790, with a tragic, comic, and operatic company. Among the subsequently celebrated performers who there commenced

<sup>1</sup> Born September 14, 1805.

their dramatic career were Baptiste the younger, Damas, and M<sup>lle</sup> Mars.

At the same time that M<sup>lle</sup> Montansier bought the *Salle de Beaujolais*, she also purchased the arcades of the *Café de Chartres*, where she herself took up her abode. Her *salons* soon became the general *rendez-vous* of all the fashion and talent of the age, even the clergy not scrupling to appear there: previously to his inhabiting the Luxembourg Palace, Barras hired two small rooms of M<sup>lle</sup> Montansier, in which he and his political friends were in the habit of assembling together, his grand receptions being held in his hostess's drawing-room. Barras one day presented *little Bonaparte*, as he was then called, to the no longer fair but witty manageress, and, wishing to make his friend's fortune, proposed to him to marry her; he even arranged a supper for the purpose of bringing about the match, but neither of the interested parties were peculiarly smitten with each other, and the matter dropped. M<sup>lle</sup> Montansier was then nearly sixty years old, and Bonaparte twenty-five: had she been thirty years younger, she might perhaps one day have been Empress of France! As it was, she eventually married the actor Neuville, who had formerly been a captain of *cuirassiers* in the Austrian service, and after his death she is said to have been secretly united to Forioso, a famous rope-dancer of the time, of whom she became enamoured at the age of seventy-eight years.

In 1793, this theatre took the name of Théâtre de la Montagne, but in 1795 it resumed its original appellation of Théâtre des Variétés. Three years later, in 1798, Brunet quitted the Théâtre de la Cité for that of M<sup>lle</sup> Montansier, and it is from the period of his *début* that the prosperity of the Variétés may be said to have dated. This celebrated actor, whose real name was Mira, was born in 1766, and acquired an early predilection for the stage from witnessing the famous Carlin perform at the Théâtre Italien. At eighteen years of age he together with his friend and school-fellow Talma played at Doyen's private theatre, and in 1789 he accompanied a troop of strollers to Mantes, where he not only learnt and performed every part which no one else would take, but also prompted and composed the bills, and all *gratis*. The comedians of his company at that time lodged in different parts of the town, wherever, in short, they could prevail on the inhabitants to

take them in, and Brunet was fortunate enough to find in the house where he resided a young woman to whom he became attached, and whom he subsequently married.

Soon after, the manager of the Havre theatre, who had heard of our hero from an old actor of the troop, offered him an engagement of 800 francs (£ 32) a-year. This Brunet gladly accepted, and wrote to inform his father of his unexpected good fortune, begging the latter at the same time, with a forethought and delicacy seldom met with in so young a man, to deduct in future the amount of his promised salary from the yearly sum which he had hitherto allowed him. He afterwards played at Amiens and Rouen, and arriving in Paris in 1793, was engaged at the Théâtre de la Cité, which, as has been already stated, he left for the Variétés. There the simplicity and *modesté* of his acting, as irresistibly comic as it was natural and unexaggerated, obtained for him a popularity hardly surpassed by that of Talma himself. For twenty years, aided by Tiercelin alone, he maintained the Théâtre Montansier in a continued state of prosperity, the very name of Brunet (no matter how indifferent the pieces he played in) being a sufficient attraction to ensure a crowded house. Among the best creations of this inimitable *artiste* were *Monsieur Vautour*, *Maître André*, and *le Tyran peu délicat*: during one of his performances of the latter piece, Talma, who was behind the scenes, is said to have been so struck by his emphatic delivery of a certain imprecation in the part, that he observed, "If that fellow were in my line, he would *enfoncer* me!"

As a proof that his reputation was European, Brazier relates in his admirable "*Histoire des Petits Théâtres de Paris*" that being one day (March 31, 1814) on guard at the barrier Saint Martin, a young Calmuck officer, who could hardly speak a word of French, asked him the way to Brunet's theatre. The Variétés were, indeed, at that time especially patronized by military men, as well Frenchmen as foreigners; the *foyer* being selected as a place of general *rendez-vous* by the officers who visited Paris on leave of absence during a truce.

It was an invariable custom for a long series of years to father every possible kind of joke on Brunet; nay, it was even gravely asserted that, owing to the political allusions contained in his *calambours* having been considered disrespectful to the government, he was in the habit of



being arrested at least once a fortnight. Some even went so far as to say that he was escorted every evening to the theatre by two *gendarmes*, by whom he was taken back to prison after the performances. It is needless to add that he was perfectly innocent of all the peccadilloes laid to his charge, but, far from feeling annoyed at being made the scape-goat of others, he rather relished the idea of being thought a *mauvais sujet*, and, when any unusually long interval had elapsed since his last supposed imprisonment, asked his friends if they could tell him whether he had been arrested the day before.

These were the days of *Jocrisse* and *Cadet Roussel*, two of the most successful and popular pieces ever produced at any Parisian theatre : the author of *Cadet Roussel*, whose name was Aude, was a remarkably eccentric character, and has been the hero of several anecdotes, one of which we relate. Entering a *cabaret* one day, he found there a workman disputing with his wife, who was both young and pretty. "Shall I never find any one," cried the former in a sort of soliloquy, "who will take my wife off my hands ! I would let her go cheap." "How much do you want for her," said Aude. "Oh!" replied the other, "give me six francs, and she is yours." Aude offered him twelve, which the workman gladly took, and, shaking the author by the hand, volunteered to stand treat to close the bargain. After repeated libations, Aude went home accompanied by his new purchase, who subsequently lived with him for forty years.

Mention has already been made of Tiercelin, the popular actor *par excellence*. He took his types from the lowest classes of the people, and invested each of his personations with a life-like reality. He died in 1837, aged seventy-four : three days after, a crown of *immortelles* was thrown upon the stage, on which these words were inscribed :

"AUX MANES DE TIERCELIN,

LE PUBLIC RECONNAISSANT."

In 1806, the actors of the Théâtre Français, who had long complained bitterly that, owing to the proximity of Brunet's theatre to their own, the public had acquired a distaste for classic literature, and preferred the jokes of *Cadet Roussel* to all the beauties of Corneille and Racine, made repeated remonstrances to the government on the subject, and

being strongly supported by Fouché and the greater part of the public press, prevailed on the Emperor to issue a decree ordering the company of the Variétés to quit the Palais Royal on or before January 1, 1807, giving them, however, permission to build another theatre on the Boulevard Montmartre. While this was in process of erection, Brunet and his comrades, in obedience to the Imperial command, withdrew from the scene of their early triumphs to the Théâtre de la Cité, on the other side of the river; taking leave of the public at the conclusion of their last performance (December 31, 1806,) in a series of couplets composed for the occasion by Désaugiers, Moreau, and Francis, and sung by the different actors and actresses in succession. We quote some of the best :

" Vous qui, chaque soir, à nos Jeux  
Depuis dix ans venez sourire,  
Daignez recevoir nos adieux,  
En partant, notre joie expire."

Aubertin, as *le Jardinier de M. Girafe*, sang :

" J'aous consol'rons bientôt, ma fol,  
Du p'tit voyag' que j'allons faire,  
Si chaque leur qu'ici je voi  
Vient orner not' nouveau parterre."

He was thus succeeded by Tiercelin, in *Vadé à la Grenouillère* :

" Si vous craignez d'passer les ponts,  
Le balaiier d'la Grenouillère  
S'ra z'un pèche, j'vous en réponds,  
Pour vous fair'passer la rivière."

Of these couplets, amounting in number to thirteen, none was more vehemently applauded than that sung by M<sup>me</sup> Mengozzi (mother of M<sup>me</sup> Guillemin of the Vaudeville), which ran as follows :

" Vous que l'ambour el lambourin  
A la gloir' au plaisir entraîne;  
Quand vous avez passé le Rhin,  
Craindrez vous de passer la Seine."

These simple verses were sung with such real feeling that they obtained a *succès de larmes*, the impression produced on the audience communicating itself to the actors, all of whom were in tears.

The Théâtre de la Cité, notwithstanding its excellent company, was for some time but thinly attended. *La Famille des Innocents*, however, proved a mine of good fortune to the hitherto unlucky emigrants; the

receipts during the first three months after its production amounting to something like twelve thousand pounds. At length, June 24, 1807, the present theatre opened, Brunet being admitted to a share of the management. The company comprised, besides the *artistes* already mentioned, others scarcely less celebrated, by whose united efforts the success of the Théâtre des Variétés of the Boulevard Montmartre equalled, if it did not surpass, that obtained by its prototype in the Palais Royal.

Among the sterling actors attached to the new theatre was Bosquier Gavaudan, the best couplet singer of his day. Possessor of a naturally clear and melodious voice, he articulated each word with such peculiar distinctness, that not one syllable was lost. Which of his successors can say as much? From constantly personating officers of every grade, Bosquier Gavaudan is said to have grown so accustomed to wear a red ribbon in his coat, that, even when sitting in his dressing-gown at home, he never felt comfortable without one in his button-hole.

One of his most talented comrades was M<sup>me</sup> Barroyer, whose career at the Variétés was both long and brilliant. In 1789, she went with the rest of M<sup>lle</sup> Montansier's company on a provincial tour, and among her fellow-travellers was a little girl, nine years old, called Hippolyte, whose precocious talent so charmed M<sup>me</sup> Barroyer, that she watched her progress with interest, and even gave her some instruction, feeling sure that her young pupil would profit by it. The event justified her expectations, the little girl being no other than M<sup>lle</sup> Mars. In 1782, Charles X., then Comte d'Artois, is said to have admired M<sup>me</sup> Barroyer; forty six years after, being commanded to play, with the rest of the company, before the court at the Élysée Bourbon, she was recognised by him as an old acquaintance, and promised a pension, which, however, the revolution of 1830 prevented his bestowing on her.

In 1809, this admirable *troupe* was still further improved by the engagement of Potier, who, after having served at the battles of Jemmapes and Valmy, had obtained his discharge from the army on the plea of delicate health. This excellent *artiste*, whom Talma pronounced to be the most consummate actor he had ever known, was born in Paris in 1775, of a good family. His retirement from the service was shortly

followed by his *début* at the Délassements Comiques, where he became the comrade of Joanny, who had, like himself, been a soldier. From thence Potier went to the theatre in the Rue du Bac, and after a provincial tour, during which he visited Brittany, Normandy, and subsequently Bordeaux, was summoned to the Variétés, where he made his first appearance in *Maître André*, one of the best creations of Brunet. A Parisian audience is seldom inclined to show much indulgence to new faces, and the *habitues* of the Variétés, by whom the character of *Maître André* was inseparably identified with Brunet, had little sympathy for the efforts, however promising, of a *débutant*. It is not, therefore, surprising that Potier, instead of being received with applause, was listened to coldly, and even hissed. Another actor would probably have been disheartened by such a reception; but Potier, who knew his own worth, merely remarked: "*Ma foi*, the Parisians shall take me as I am, or I will go back to the provinces!" They *did* take him as he was, and had no reason to repent having done so, the increasing prosperity of the theatre being an unmistakeable proof of the attractive qualities of the new recruit.

In 1818, owing to some differences with the management, Potier left the Variétés for the Porte Saint Martin, where he created, among other parts, the famous *Père Sourniois* in *les Petites Danaïdes*. He afterwards returned to the Variétés, and later still played at the Galté, the Nouveautés, and the Palais Royal. On his return from a journey to Holland in 1835, he was compelled from ill-health to retire from the stage, and died May 19, 1838, aged sixty four, at his country house at Fontenay-sous-Bois. His remains were subsequently brought to Paris for interment, and the funeral was attended by most of the leading authors and actors of the day, among others by Brunet, who, notwithstanding his great age, insisted on paying the last tribute of respect and affection to his old comrade.

"Potier," says Brazier, "was in my opinion one of the best actors that ever adorned any stage. His eyes and arms spoke for him when his tongue was silent. He had perfect tact, and all his creations were stamped with truth and originality." Among the numberless pieces which owed their success to his wonderfully versatile talent, we may cite especially *le Bénéficiaire*, *Werther*, *les Frères Féroces*, and *le Borgmestre de Saardam* (the latter at the Porte Saint Martin).

Potier was succeeded by Legrand, an excellent comic actor, whose performance of *Werther* was considered but little inferior to that of his great predecessor, Vernet, and Odry. Vernet, like M<sup>lle</sup> Déjazet, commenced his theatrical career at a very early age at the little *Théâtre des Capucines*, and on his first appearance is said to have been so terrified by the glare of the lamps and the applause of the audience, that he fairly turned tail and bolted. He soon, however, recovered confidence, and after having been for some time a member of the juvenile company, was engaged at the Variétés to play the young lovers. A considerable period elapsed without his comic powers being even suspected, but chance leading to their ultimate discovery, he took his place beside Potier, Tiercelin, and Brunet. It is said that Talma loved to watch these four inimitable actors perform together, so exquisitely natural were their delineations of even the most absurd and ridiculous characters; and we are ourselves acquainted with a lady of high literary reputation, who has often told us that whenever she felt indisposed or out of spirits, she invariably went to see Vernet, as being the best and most unfailing resource against *ennui*.

Had this great comedian never created any other part but that of *Gaspard* in *le Père de la Débutante*, he would still be entitled to rank among the first *artistes* of his own or any other day, a more finished piece of acting having been rarely if ever witnessed: but his name is also inseparably associated with a long list of no less brilliant creations, among which we need only mention *Prosper et Vincent*, *Madame Gibou et Madame Pochet*, and *Mathias l'Invalide*. He has long been a sufferer from the gout, and is unable to act except at intervals: he, however, occasionally reappears on the boards of his old theatre (to which he has always remained constant), and though age and ill-health have laid a heavy hand on him, he still retains enough of his original *verve* and humour to ensure him an enthusiastic welcome from all admirers of genuine acting.

What a contrast is there between the comedy of Vernet and the farce of Odry: the one so refined and natural, the other so grotesque and absurd, and yet so irresistibly droll! Odry is an actor *sui generis*, he imitates none and can be imitated by none; nor is there the least analogy between his talent and that of others. He was born May 17, 1781, at

Versailles, and after playing some time in the provinces and *Bouligne* was engaged at the Galté to take fourth-rate parts and make himself generally useful. He remained nearly unknown until 1805, when he obtained a slight celebrity at the Porte Saint Martin, and went from thence to the Variétés, where chance alone brought him into notice. A piece was produced called *Quinze Ans d'Absence*, and among the *dramatis persone* was a stupid numskull of a peasant, whose wife would never let him say a word. The whole part consisted of scarcely ten lines, and Tiercelin, for whom it was originally intended, refused to take it. Odry was not so scrupulous, and played it so admirably that his reputation as a low comedian was at once established. From that time to the present day he has stood alone as an actor of broad farce : his creations (and they are legion) must die with him, for no one is capable of replacing him. Who indeed would be so foolhardy as to undertake *Bilboquet* in *les Saltimbanques* with the recollection of Odry still fresh in the memory of every play-goer! who could hope to equal his matchless "*en r'l'a assez*" in *Madame Gibou et Madame Pochet*, or his queer antics as the bear in *l'Ours et le Pacha*!

Even now, though broken down by age and infirmities, Odry is still inimitable and unapproachable; one can hardly hear a word he says, it is true, but his face, voice, and manner are as outrageously comic as ever. The following description of the effect formerly produced by him on his audience might have been written but yesterday, so correctly does it express the sensation which he has still the exclusive privilege of creating. "He came on the stage, and the audience began to laugh; he walked a step or two, they laughed louder, and when he opened his mouth to speak, the whole house was in a roar." Odry has not always been attached to the Variétés, having accepted temporary engagements at the Gaité and the Folies Dramatiques, but he has never, while in Paris, remained long absent from his favourite theatre, where, like Vernet, he may still occasionally be seen by the side of his old comrades, Lepeintre *ainé* and Flore.

Returning to the history of the Variétés, we find that notwithstanding its change of position that theatre was little less exempt from persecution on the Boulevard Montmartre than it had formerly been in the Palais Royal. In 1811, among other pieces of rather questionable taste

produced there, one in particular entitled *l'Ogresse, ou la Belle au Bois Dormant*, in which Tiercelin played the Ogress, enjoyed immense popularity. Certain passages in this piece afforded the Duke of Rovigo, then minister of police, a pretext for summoning the managers of all the minor theatres before him one day, and giving each successively his opinion as to the moral or immoral tendency of the different productions brought out at their respective houses. When it came to Brunet's turn, the minister, after declaiming angrily against the unfortunate *Ogresse* and other pieces of the kind, the bad taste of which, he observed, was equal to their immorality, concluded by declaring that if the *répertoire* was not purified, he would give orders for the theatre to be closed. Brunet ventured timidly to reply that as all the pieces in question had been previously sent for examination to the *censure*, he ought not to be made answerable for the effect they might produce when acted, adding that under the ancient *régime* far more objectionable performances had been given.

At this the minister frowned, and, walking up and down the room in long strides, exclaimed, "Yes, you are right: under the ancient *régime* dukes, marquesses, and countesses laughed at such insipid stuff, but they were all sent to the right-about, and that won't happen to us."

Two years after, Napoleon was at Elba, and the minister of police out of office.

Had it not been for the protection of Cambacérès, who openly patronized the Variétés, the company would probably have been forced a second time to change their quarters, so virulent were the press and the royal theatres in their attacks against Brunet and his comrades. The chancellor, however, by showing himself there almost every evening (1), attended by his two satellites, the Marquis de Villevielle and M. d'Agrefeuille (2), enabled the management to defy the envious

(1) Cambacérès is said to have been by no means unsensible to the charms of Mlle Cécile, a celebrated actress of the Variétés, who disputed for several years the sceptre of beauty with Mlle Pauline, Aldégonde, and Adeline.

(2) M. de Villevielle was a man of *esprit*, and author of a pamphlet published shortly after the death of Voltaire, in which he vindicates the right of buried philosophical philosophers to Christian burial. "If you refuse interment," says he, "in the greatest man of your nation, I will have his remains sent to the English, who will be proud to place them in Westminster Abbey."

D'Agrefeuille was a well-known *quarrend*, and so thoroughly devoted to Cambacérès,

hostility of their rivals, whose principal ground of complaint was that, while their own actors were playing to empty benches, Brunet and Tiercelin attracted crowds to listen to their vulgar jokes and *catembours*, to the great detriment of the legitimate drama.

The pieces, however, produced at the Variétés were not wholly of the class above referred to : in many of them the prevailing follies of the day were shown up and ridiculed with unsparing severity. In *le Combat des Montagnes*, by Messrs. Scribe and Dupin, one of the characters introduced was a young tradesman called M. Calicot, who aped the military dress, and wore spurs and very warlike mustachios. This was intended as a cut against certain citizens, whose delight it was to sport high-heeled boots, and imitate as far as they could the dress and manner of the veterans of *la Grande Armée*. A cabal was got up against the piece, and it was hissed down. The management, however, would not consent to its withdrawal, but reproduced it with the addition of a very witty prologue, the success of which was so prodigious that the malcontents had the mortification of seeing both prologue and piece maintain their places in the bills for two months. The name of *Calicot* became proverbial, and the following couplet, addressed to the spurred and booted apprentices of the capital, was circulated from mouth to mouth, and attained a popularity as unexpected by its authors as it was mortifying to the heroes of the counter for whose benefit it was written :

" Ah ! croyez-enoi, deposez sans regrets,  
Ces fers bruyants, ces appareils de guerre,  
Et des amours sous vos pas indiscrets,  
N'effrayez plus les ephortes légères.  
Si des beautés doul vous causez les pleurs,  
Nulle à vos yeux se dérobo,  
Contentez-vous, heureux vainqueurs,  
De déclarer leurs tendres cœurs.  
Mais ne déclarez pas leur robe."

Towards 1829, in which year M. Armand Dartois purchased Brunet's share of the management, the prosperity of the Variétés began sensibly to diminish. By this time, Vernet was almost the only one of the once

that during the stormy epoch which preceded the downfall of Napoleon, he is reported to have said, in allusion to the Emperor, who was nothing in his eyes in comparison to his much-honoured patron : "*Cet homme en fera tant qu'il finira par compromettre mon araigneur.*"



excellent *troupe* left to sustain the reputation of the theatre for gaiety, and even he was scarcely able single-handed to contend against a succession of indifferent pieces, bearing indeed but slight resemblance to the admirable buffooneries produced in the days of Potier and Brunet. As a last resource, Frédéric Lemaître was engaged; but that great actor, though he displayed his wonted talent in *Kean* and other creations, was but ill seconded by the rest of the company, who were compelled to play both drama and vaudeville without possessing the necessary qualities for either. An exception must, however, be made in favour of Bressant, now a member of the Gymnase, who was even then one of the best *jeunes premiers* in Paris; but all his and Frédéric's united efforts failed in rendering popular at the Variétés a class of pieces which can only be fairly appreciated at the Porte St. Martin or the Ambigu.

A more profitable acquisition was subsequently made by the management in the person of M<sup>lle</sup> Jenny Vertpré, who, after an absence of some years, reappeared in the *Chevalier d'Eon*: the following couplet, sung by her in the character of an inn-keeper's daughter, was warmly applauded:

"Dans cet hôtel, on a beau faire,  
La foule n'abonde pas toujours;  
Mais enfin, en ces lieux, j'espère  
Qu'avec moi r'viendront les beaux jours:  
Car du public je suis la fille,  
Trop heureuse, si, toujours bon,  
Il me trouvait assez gentille  
Pour se balader la maison."

This exquisite actress was born at Bordeaux, and when only five years old made her first appearance on any stage at the principal theatre of her native city, to which her uncle was then attached in the capacity of *maître des ballets*. Her *début* took place in a new ballet, for which a child was wanted small enough to get into a drum, and at the same time pretty and elegant; and Jenny Vertpré chancing to unite all these indispensable qualities, she was selected for the occasion. Two years after, her mother brought her to Paris, and she was taught by Brazier, the clever *vaudevilliste* and song-writer, to sing some of his and Désaugiers's *chansons*. He then obtained her admittance to the Théâtre des Capu-

lines, already mentioned as the scene of Verne's early dramatic essays.

She was afterwards (at the age of nine) engaged at the Vaudeville, and remained there four years, after which, returning from a provincial tour, she went to the Porte Saint Martin, where she also continued four years in company with Potier. There she created *l'Amour in les Petites Danaïdes*, the immense success of which piece was in no slight degree due to her talent and *gentillesse*. Quitting the Porte Saint Martin for the Variétés, she left that theatre in turn for the Gymnase, and from thence crossed the channel to become manager of the newly arrived French company in London, Arnal and Monrose forming part of her *troupe*. This was not her first expedition out of France, for she had already given the amateurs of good acting in Berlin, as well as in Holland and Belgium, a taste of her quality; but nowhere was her graceful and refined talent more appreciated than in England. From London she returned to the Variétés, but again started on her travels, after taking a benefit at the Odéon.

M<sup>lle</sup> Jenny Vertpré became in 1824 M<sup>me</sup> Carmouche, by her marriage with the popular *vaudevilliste* of that name. She has now wholly retired from the stage, her last public appearance (we believe) having taken place in October, 1844, at Morsang-sur-Seine, where an entertainment was got up for the benefit of a charity; M<sup>me</sup> Rachel and Dupont (the ex-*soubrette* of the Théâtre Français) being among the performers. This charming actress was aptly called the miniature Mars, being extremely diminutive in stature, and yet gifted with the most extraordinary natural talent. In *la Servante justifiée*, *la Morraine*, *les Premiers Amours*, and indeed in all her creations, she displayed a graceful and piquant *note* peculiar to herself, as well as a versatility which enabled her to assume every variety of character with the same unfailing success. She now devotes most of her time to the instruction of young actresses, M<sup>me</sup> Désirée of the Gymnase being one of her most promising pupils.

M. Dartois was succeeded in the management of the Variétés by M. Bayard, the author of *le Gamin de Paris*, and son-in-law of M. Scribe, who resigned his post in turn to M. Dumanoir, likewise a writer of many successful vaudevilles. The present director is M. Nestor Roqueplan,

brother of the distinguished painter, M. Camille Roqueplan. Among the actors and actresses of talent who have of late years been members of this theatre, but who no longer form part of the company, we may mention Lhérie (1), Cazot, Neuville (2), M<sup>lle</sup> Jenny Colon, who has been already spoken of in our notice of the Opéra Comique; M<sup>lle</sup> Esther (3), M<sup>lle</sup> Maria Volet (4), and M<sup>lle</sup> Valence (5).

Since the engagement of Bouffé and M<sup>lle</sup> Déjazet, the Variétés have been in a high state of prosperity, though it is to be hoped that the talents of the former *artiste* may in future be better employed than they have hitherto been; a few good novelties in the style of *le Gamin de Paris* or *les Vieux Pêchés* would do more towards increasing the reputation both of the actor and of the theatre than all the trashy pieces which have been produced at short intervals during the last two years, and which, being for the most part utterly destitute of gaiety, wit, or humour, contrast sadly with the admirable drolleries which once formed the *répertoire* of the théâtre Montansier.

#### AMÉDÉE.

A very useful third-rate actor, who principally delights in personating funny old men.

(1) Lhérie was the son of a Paris jeweller, and author of several successful pieces. He died March 29, 1845.

(2) Neuville quitted the Variétés April 4, 1846. He owes his dramatic reputation more to his skill in imitating his comrades than to any remarkable talent possessed by him as an actor.

(3) M<sup>lle</sup> Esther, now in Russia, was the original Zéphirine in *les Saltimbanques*, and an excellent dancer of the *caucase*, and other like importations from the Grande Chaumière and the Prado. She was a dark-eyed beauty, with abundance of liveliness and *entrain*.

(4) M<sup>lle</sup> Maria Volet, now retired from the stage, is a daughter of Coralli, the *maître des ballets* at the Académie Royale, and made her *début* at the Variétés in the spring of 1844, in *les Trois Poïka*. She was an agreeable actress, a charming dancer, and a very pretty woman.

(5) M<sup>lle</sup> Valence, another pretty deserter from the troupe, was intended for a pianiste, but having a good voice, and, moreover, an inclination for the stage, she was encouraged by her singing-master, Duprez, to study for the theatre. Her *début* at the Variétés took place January 18, 1844, as *Maryelaine*, and up to the time of her retirement from the stage in the spring of 1846, she created several parts in a very creditable manner, especially in *le Garde Forestier* and *la Samaritaine*. M<sup>lle</sup> Valence was not only a very pleasing actress, but an accomplished singer, and in neither capacity is she likely to be easily replaced.

## BOUFFÉ (MARIE).

This inimitable *artiste*, the most perfect comedian of his day, was born (we believe in Paris) September 4, 1800. Son of a carver and gilder, he was himself apprenticed to the same profession, and although he, as well as his sister, M<sup>me</sup> Gauthier, displayed an early predilection for the stage, it does not appear that either of them evinced any unusual dramatic precocity beyond the mere love of acting. His first histrionic essays took place at Doyen's private theatre, and on the opening of the Panorama Dramatique, April 14, 1821, he was engaged as a member of the company at an annual salary of 300 francs (£ 12), which was increased in the following year to 1,200 francs (£ 48), and subsequently to 3,000 francs (£ 120). He used at first to gild frames between the acts in a little workshop he had established in the theatre, as the only means in his power of propitiating his father, who had always disliked his adopting the stage as a profession; but when he became comparatively rich, he considered himself justified in devoting his whole leisure time to study.

In 1824, he was engaged at the Galté to play *le Pauvre Berger*, on the first representation of which piece he appeared surrounded by a flock of *real* sheep; the poor animals, frightened at the applause which was liberally bestowed on them, ran about the stage in the utmost terror and confusion, some of them even going so far as to invade the *avant-scènes*. On the following evening pasteboard sheep were substituted, which answered the purpose equally well and were infinitely more manageable.

From the Galté Bouffé went to the Nouveautés, where several admirable creations, and more particularly that of *Caleb* in the piece of that name, stamped him as one of the most natural and yet most finished actors of his day. But it was at the Gymnase that the inexhaustible resources of his talent were first brought into full play, and the surprising versatility of his powers fairly tested; he was for years the chief, indeed the sole, support of the ancient Théâtre de Madame; and, during the latter part of his stay there, in spite of the ban launched against M. Poirson by the dramatic authors' association, in spite of the

miserable pieces in which he was condemned to play, his name alone was sufficient to ward off for a time the storm which, after his secession from the company, no effort on the part of the manager could avert.

It was early in the winter of 1844 that Bouffé made his first appearance at the Variétés as *le Gamin de Paris*, and this revival of one of his most popular and brilliant creations proved so attractive that for weeks the doors of the theatre were literally besieged, and places bought up at any price. *Le Gamin* was followed by *l'Oncle Baptiste*, *Michel Perrin*, *les Enfants de Troupe*, *la Fille de l'Acare*, and several other masterpieces of acting, all of which are so intimately associated with the name of Bouffé as to be unapproachable to any other comedian (1). Each of these *reprisées* were equally productive of pleasure to the public and of profit to the treasury, which is more than can be said of the few original creations entrusted to this eminent actor since his *début* at the Variétés, all of which, without a single exception, have been utterly unworthy of his talent (2).

The great perfection of Bouffé's acting is its truth to nature : he possesses in a remarkable degree the power of so identifying himself with the character he represents as to impress the spectator with the belief that he is listening to a scene in real life, instead of to a dramatic fiction; and this impression is strengthened by the perfect ease of manner and entire freedom from all theatrical display which, perhaps more than any of his other qualities, establish the incontestable superiority of this actor over even his most talented contemporaries. His gaiety is frank and communicative, his pathos simple, yet inexpressibly touching; the foundation of his character is sensibility, he *feels* all he says. He never employs any superfluity of action for the purpose of producing effect, nor does he seek first by raising his voice almost to a shriek, and then by abruptly lowering it to a whisper, to *startle* his audience into a fit of enthusiasm: on the contrary, a studied sobriety both of speech and gesture is one of the peculiar features of his

(1. We must make our exception in favour of *Farren*, whose *Michel Perrin*, we think, fully equals, if it does not surpass, that of the great French artist.

(2) Two out of the number, *le Chevalier de Grignon* and *le Mouze*, have been played in London, the one at the Haymarket, under the title of *The Old School*, and the other at the Adelphi, under that of *the Cabin Boy*. The others are *Boquillon à la Recherche d'un père*, *le Garde Forestier*, and *Deux Compagnons du Tour de France*.

acting. Whether the character assumed by him be serious or comic, his personation of it is equally life-like and natural : the suspicious and care-worn miser in *la Fille de l'Acare*, the lively and garrulous *Père Turlututu*, and the upright simple-minded *Michel Perrin*, types in no one point resembling each other, and yet portrayed by him with the most finished artistical skill, prove, more than words can do, the wonderful versatility of his talent.

A clever French writer (1), in an excellent biographical notice of Bouffé, has truly remarked that " if the public find that he makes but little progress in the course of each year, it is because he is as near perfection as an actor can be." Nor is the homage addressed to this great *artiste* by his comrade Arnal less flattering or less merited; we quote the concluding lines of the *Eptre à Bouffé* :

" Oui, si je vois parfois l'indulgence accueillir  
L'acteur dont l'amour pour son art se dévot,  
Je ne rappellerai mon ardeur et mon zèle,  
Et les quelques braves dont mon cœur a joué  
Mais chez le même artiste... ô prodige inouï  
Si je vois la finesse et profonde et naïve,  
La grâce, la gaieté spirituelle et vive -  
S'il sait être énergique avec simplicité,  
S'il joint au naturel la sensibilité,  
Aux principes de l'art s'il est toujours fidèle,  
Si toute chose en lui peut servir de modèle,  
Enfin, si le bon goût est son guide, sa loi,  
Alors mes souvenirs se porteront sur toi "

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#### CACHARDY.

A good-looking and gentlemanly *amoureux*.

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#### DUSSERT.

This very useful actor commenced his dramatic career shortly after the revolution of 1830, at the Petit Lazari, then

(1) M. Eugène Briffault.

under the management of Frenoy, once called the Talma of the Ambigu. He now plays fathers, uncles, guardians, and other elderly gentlemen at the Variétés in a very careful and creditable manner. Indeed, if all the members of the company bestowed as much patience and attention on the study of their parts as Dussert invariably does, the result would be a more perfect *ensemble* than is usually witnessed in the pieces produced at this theatre.

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HOFFMANN (ANROË-TALMA).

One of the most rising actors of the day. Originally a working carpenter, Hoffmann made a successful *début* in a little theatre erected in the *Jardin de Tivoli* in 1831, and, after acquiring some stage experience in the provinces, was eventually engaged at the Variétés. There he has by slow but sure degrees gradually worked his way up almost to the top of the tree, and from a promising *débutant* has become an accomplished comedian. One of Hoffmann's best qualities is his frank and natural gaiety, which has sometimes been even more instrumental in saving an indifferent piece than the admirable talent of Bouffé himself. In *les Deux Compagnons du Tour de France*, for instance, Hoffmann, though entrusted with a comparatively unimportant character, contrived by the originality and humour of his acting not only to divide the applause of the audience with his celebrated comrade, but even to obtain the largest share. So decisive, indeed, was his success that after a certain number of representations Bouffé, for whom the piece had been expressly written, unwilling to appear *second* where he ought to have been *first*, resigned his part to another actor, leaving our hero in undisturbed possession of his laurels.

As *Lotulipe* in *Gentil Bernard*, Hoffmann has made another advance in public favour: his performance of the bold dragoon is highly spirited and amusing, and his singing remarkably good. This reminds us, by the way, of another of his peculiar excellencies; next to Levassor, he is the best *chaussonnette* singer in Paris, possessing not only a clear musical voice, but also an inexhaustible fund of gaiety and original

humour. As the *Anglais Touriste* he is exquisitely droll : he has not only caught the English accent very cleverly, but also the walk, manner, and above all the costume ; so that, setting aside a little exaggeration, he has at least as much claim to be mistaken for a real Simon Pure as have Mr. Wigan or Mr. Morris Barnett to be considered Frenchmen.

Hoffmann is tall and rather stoutly built : his countenance has a frank and cheerful expression, and there is a sly lurking merriment in the corner of his eye sufficient of itself, even before he has opened his mouth, to put the dullest audience into good humour. We do not know him personally, but we would wager that that very twinkle of the eye bespeaks a corresponding kindness and joviality of heart : if it be not so, adieu to our faith in physiognomy !

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#### HYACINTHE.

Born at Amiens, April 15, 1814. At the age of eight he became a member of M. Comte's juvenile company, and, when only twelve years old, had the honour of playing together with several of his comrades before the Duc de Bordeaux at the Tuileries. One evening, after their performances were over, the Duke showed the young actors some splendid toys he had just received as a present from Louis XVIII. Forgetting the subject in the boy, Hyacinthe suddenly took it into his head to *tutoyer* His Royal Highness, and instantly received a terrible intimation of the impropriety he had committed in the shape of a kick from the boot of a tall *garde du corps*, who was standing sentinel close by. Instead of smiling agreeably under the infliction, as M. de Talleyrand on a similar occasion recommended, he began to howl so piteously that his lamentations reached the ear of the Duchesse de Berry, who did her best to console him. He refused, however, most decidedly to reappear at court, and his family, finding that his theatrical progress was not so rapid as they had expected, placed him as shop-boy in a musical warehouse, where he remained two years ; until, tired of mounting steps to look after dusty *arie* and *souate*, he tried for an engagement at the Variétés, and, thanks to the intercession of some kind



friends, was admitted as *figurant*. There he saw and studied the acting of Bruet, Vernet, Odry, and other dramatic celebrities, and at length, wishing to put into practice what he had learnt, he joined a strolling company on the point of starting for Normandy. He was received a member of the *troupe*, with a right to a full share of the profits, and after a fortnight's acting at Evreux and other towns, pocketed as his dividend the sum of seventeen sous. He consoled himself by saying that had he only been entitled to half a share, he would have received but eight sous and a half.

Rather dissatisfied with Normandy, he returned to Paris, and shortly after made a tolerably successful *début* at the Vaudeville during the time of the cholera. The Rue de Chartres, however, was not his place, and he soon left it for the Variétés, where he had succeeded in obtaining a moderate engagement. There his dry humour and comic physiognomy were infinitely more appreciated than they had been by the side of Arnal. After playing creditably in *l'If de Croissey*, *la Consigne*, etc., he created *Gringalet* in *les Saltimbanques*, and shared the applause of the audience with Odry and the pretty M<sup>lle</sup> Esther. From that time Hyacinthe took his place among the leading actors of the Variétés, and has recently in *le Maître d'École*, *la Vendetta*, and other pieces, proved himself an efficient representative of that peculiar line of characters which, no one since the death of Bruet has attempted with similar success.

Hyacinthe has a valuable auxiliary in his face, and more particularly in his nose, which in size is on a par with that of Alcide Tousez, if indeed it be not even larger. As an actor he rather resembles Odry; he wants the *finesse* and tact of Arnal and Vernet, but can *lancer le mot* with a bold *aplomb* peculiar to himself, the effect of which is irresistibly ludicrous. If he cannot be called a first-rate comedian, he is, to say the very least, a most amusing actor, and there is a certain carelessness and simpleton-like *laisser-aller* in his manner which accords perfectly with the rather *maïs* (not to say *bête*) expression of his countenance. We must not omit to add that his by-play is always excellent.

## JOI BDAIN (ÉDOUARD).

An indifferent *amoureux*, whose *début* at this theatre took place in November, 1845, in *l'Épée de mon Père*.

## KOPP.

Formerly at the Théâtre Saint Marcel. He has a comic face and a pair of droll staring eyes, and fills out a trifling part very respectably.

## LABA (PAUL).

An intelligent young actor, formerly *pensionnaire* of the Gymnase, and afterwards of the Théâtre Français, who first appeared at the Variétés in May, 1845, as *Henri* in *l'Épée de mon Père*. Paul Laba promises, with study, to become a very tolerable *amoureux*; his voice is clear and agreeable, and his manner both animated and gentlemanly.

## LAFONT.

Pierre-Chéri Lafont is (we believe) a native of Bordeaux, and, being originally intended by his father for a navy surgeon, was sent thrice successively to sea in order to learn his profession. Returning after his third voyage to Paris, he resolved on abandoning the art of Hippocrates for that of Thalia, and with this aim in view became a pupil of the Conservatoire, commencing his dramatic career by singing *opéra comique* at Doyen's private theatre. There Désaugiers, then manager of the Vaudeville, found him, and he made a successful *début* in the Rue de Chartres in 1822. After acquiring there a brilliant reputation, he

transferred his talents to the Nouveautés, but eventually returned to his old quarters, which, however, he again quitted to accept an engagement together with M<sup>lle</sup> Jenny Colon in London. He subsequently played for a short time at the Renaissance, and was ultimately engaged at the Variétés, of which theatre he is still a member.

During his career at the Vaudeville, Lafont enjoyed a double celebrity as actor and *beau garçon*, and, making due allowance for the lapse of years since the period of his early triumphs, he is still a handsome man, with a noble figure and an expressive countenance : his manners and deportment are what they have ever been, those of a well-bred and polished gentleman.

One of Lafont's earliest and best creations at the Vaudeville was *Pierre le Rouge*, in which piece he sustained three characters with consummate ability; nor was his *Jean* in a dramatized version of Paul de Kock's novel of that name less remarkable. Since his engagement at the Variétés he has played with considerable talent the *General* in *le Gamin de Paris*, and *Matignon* to M<sup>lle</sup> Déjazet's *Richelieu*, besides several original creations, among which perhaps the one which does him the most honour is *le Capitaine Roquemette*. In this very amusing comedy he is seen to peculiar advantage : there is an easy assurance and a quiet natural humour about his acting, added to an entire freedom from all vulgarity or exaggeration, which, were his reputation less firmly based than it really is, would alone entitle him to rank among the most finished *artistes* of the day.

Pathos is not Lafont's forte : with all his intelligence, he wants animation and feeling, and though he can make his audience smile at will, he is seldom, if ever, able to make them weep. An occasional thickness of speech, moreover, which is especially perceptible in characters where passion or energy is required, greatly deteriorates from the effect his acting in the more dramatic parts of his *répertoire* might otherwise produce. But such criticism is, after all, hardly applicable to this celebrated performer ; he is a comedian in the strict sense of the word, and not an actor of tragedy or drama ; nor would it be more absurd to expect from M<sup>lle</sup> Rachel the qualities of a Plessy or a Déjazet, than to demand of Lafont, one of the few living *artistes* capable of fitly representing *la haute comédie*, the energy and passion of Rocage or Frédéric Lemaitre.

Lafont, it is commonly asserted, was married to Jenny Colon during the stay in London of that celebrated actress and singer, but on their return to France the union was dissolved by mutual consent. A brother of our hero, now dead, was formerly one of the leading tenors at the Académie Royale (1).

#### LEPEINTRE (aîné).

This sterling old actor, who was born in Paris, September 5, 1785, was originally intended to be *Le-Peintre* in more senses than one, his grandfather and uncle having been painters, and wishing him to follow the same profession. He, however, preferred the stage to the *studio*, and we find him at the age of twelve years engaged at the *Théâtre des Jeunes Artistes* in the Rue de Bondy. On the closing of this theatre he left Paris, together with other members of the company, for Marseilles, and subsequently played with great success at Bordeaux and at Lyons.

On Potier's secession from the Variétés some six or seven and twenty years ago, Lepeintre was chosen to fill up the void left by that great actor's departure, and some clever creations, particularly in *le Soldat Laboureur*, and *l'Auberge du Grand Frédéric*, made him an especial favourite with the *habitues* of the ancient Théâtre Montansier. Quitting the Variétés for the Vaudeville, Lepeintre, by his excellent acting in *Monsieur Botte*, became as popular in the Rue de Chartres as he had been on the Boulevard Montmartre; nor was his subsequent career at the Palais Royal less prosperous. In May, 1845, he returned to the scene of his early successes as *Michel* in *le Lansquenec*, and we hope for the sake of the theatre that he may long remain there.

Lepeintre *aîné* is one of the few surviving actors of the old school: we look upon him with an interest which his own merits alone, considerable though they be, would hardly warrant. He is almost the last

(1) Lafont's popularity in London is unbounded: of all the stars who have successively graced Mr. Mitchell's pretty theatre, he is perhaps the one whose reception has been the most flattering; his re-engagement during almost the entire season having been unanimously insisted on by the subscribers.

link which connects the Variétés of Brunet with that of M. Nestor Roqueplan ; of all that brilliant galaxy of talent which once formed the delight and boast of the Parisians, but four still remain to us, and two among those four, Vernet and Odry, are but the shadows of their former selves. Lepeintre *aîné* and M<sup>lle</sup> Flore (of whom we shall have occasion to speak hereafter) complete the number.

Were it not for an occasional indistinctness of voice and thickness of utterance, Lepeintre might yet pass for an actor in the prime of life, so little affected by time are his natural *entrain* and humorous vivacity. We have seen him play *l'Essouffé* in *le Bénéficiaire*, one of Potier's most successful creations, demanding extraordinary exertions on the part of the performer : this character, which rather resembles that of *Gaspard* in *le Père de la Débutante*, so admirably acted by Vernet, was sustained by Lepeintre with the most unflagging spirit, and with a tact and  *finesse* which could hardly have been surpassed even by his great predecessor.

Lepeintre *aîné* is equally celebrated as a punster and as a worthy kind-hearted man. "You are ambitious," said he one day to Talma, on meeting the great tragedian with a flower in his coat : "you are not satisfied with being Talma, you wish to be *fleuré*" (in allusion to the eminent comic actor of that name).

Again, he said with reference to himself that he carried abundance wherever he went, "*puisqu'on y voyait le pain traîner* (Lepeintre *aîné*)."

We conclude by quoting one instance of his kindness and generosity. One of his brothers (not Lepeintre *jeune*, but a younger brother) came to Paris with his wife, and accepted an engagement at the Folies Dramatiques. Aware that the newly arrived couple were in anything but easy circumstances, Lepeintre *aîné* invited them to dine with him at a friend's house near the Boulevard du Temple. The young actor and his wife were punctual at the appointed hour, and the door was opened by their brother, who said that in his friend's absence he would do the honours of the house. He then showed them a small dining and sitting-room with a bed-room, besides a kitchen and well-stocked cellar. "This is all very comfortable," said the *cadet*, "but it is time for our host to appear." "You are the host," replied his brother, "and this

little establishment is your own. May your talent enable you to embellish and render it still more comfortable!"

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LEPEINTRE (*Jeune*).

One of this actor's numerous biographers, in a most amusing memoir from which we quote largely in the present notice, is of opinion that Balbus Pinguis Pictor, a celebrated performer in the time of Nero, must have been an ancestor of Lepeintre *jeune*. The following description of the Roman comedian by Aulus Gellius appears, indeed, marvellously applicable to the merry mass of flesh beneath whose ponderous weight the boards of the Variétés nightly groan. "He was a short fat man, at whom it was impossible to look without laughing: he was the delight of the populace, who were amused by his obesity."

Yet Lepeintre *jeune*, if we may believe tradition, was not always the stout gentleman he is at present: he is described as having had when young a small mouth, rosy cheeks, soft blue eyes, and fair flowing ringlets which fell over his shoulders and gave him the air of a cherubim. Nay, the testimony of his old nurse has been quoted to prove that when a child he had the waist of a wasp instead of that of an elephant, and that to look at him one would have supposed him capable of passing through the eye of a needle!

However this may be, it is certain that Lepeintre *jeune* commenced his theatrical career by playing first the young lovers, and subsequently the tyrants and traitors in melodrama, until, finding that he was making very slow progress up the ladder of fame, he finally resolved, as a last resource, to grow fat. "Soon," says the memoir above referred to, "his pretty mouth took the shape of a letter-box, and his head that of a pumpkin; and since then his popularity has been ever on the increase. He now forms part of the curiosities of the capital, and when a young provincial comes to Paris, his father's injunctions are: "Above all, do not forget to see Napoleon's column and Monsieur Lepeintre *jeune*!"

After playing for fifteen years at Versailles, Lepeintre *jeune* was for

a long time attached to the Vaudeville, of which theatre he was one of the most indefatigable members, often sustaining four different characters in the same evening. *La Famille de l'Apothicaire*, *Renaudin de Coen*, and other favourite pieces owed much of their success to his exertions, his appearance on the stage alone being generally sufficient to ensure the good humour of his audience. Since his engagement at the Variétés, he may be said to have gained both in size and popularity, though the parts entrusted to him have been rarely important. His voice is at times so indistinct that it is difficult to understand what he says; but his face, figure, look, and manner are as droll, nay, droller than ever.

Lepeintre *jeune* has the reputation of being even a more confirmed punster than his brother, a collection of his *calembours* having been formerly sold in the theatre for four *sous*. He is said to be the gayest mortal under the sun, thoughtless and improvident in pecuniary matters, and rarely, if ever, out of debt; but at the same time a thorough laughing philosopher and *bon vivant*, and moreover a warm-hearted and amiable man.

He has written some pieces for the Folies Dramatiques, as well as for M. Comte's theatre in the Passage Choiseul, one of his productions bearing the strange title of "*Ah! mon habit, que je vous remercie!*" He was once present at an entertainment given by M. Comte, in celebration of his birth-day, at his country house near Paris, on which occasion each of the guests successively paid their Amphitryon some compliment either in prose or verse. When it came to the turn of Lepeintre *jeune*, he addressed his host as follows, in allusion to the latter's well-known skill as a conjuror:

"Un doux prestige t'accompagne,  
De tes tours chacun est surpris;  
Ta demeure est à la campagne,  
Et ton adresse est à Paris."

We subjoin the epitaph proposed for this elephantine actor by the biographer above mentioned:

"Ci-gît Lepeintre *jeune*, le plus drôle de corps, et le corps le plus drôle."

## PÉREY (CHARLES).

One of the shortest but drollest low comedians on the French stage, whose humour, though not wholly free from vulgarity, is original and highly amusing. He was for several years at the Ambigu, and his creation of *André* in the drama of *Madeleine* procured him an engagement at the Variétés. As *Jaillou* in *Gentil Bernard*, Charles Pérey is quite at home : he looks the country clown to the life, and pinches and slaps his newly-married wife (by way of proving his tenderness *à la mode du pays*) with infinite *gusto*.

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## RÉBARD (JEAN-BAPTISTE-HIPPOLYTE).

We sincerely congratulate this actor on his return to the Variétés (May 10, 1846), where he is far more at home than he has ever been at the Gymnase. Originally a jeweller, Rébard, after a little preparatory practice *en amateur*, made his first public *début* at the Cirque Olympique, and quitting that theatre for the Folies Dramatiques, played *Bertrand* in *Robert Macaire* in so humorous and effective a manner as to attract the notice of the manager of the Variétés, who offered him an engagement. His droll face and droller manner secured him a favourable reception, and he soon obtained a *local* popularity which ought to have induced him to remain where he was. At the Gymnase over-acting is barely tolerated, never encouraged, and the same *charges* which will throw a Variétés audience into an ecstasy of delight are looked upon in the light of mere buffoonery by the exacting critics of the ancient *Théâtre de Madame*. With such an audience all Rébard's attempts at exciting a laugh by the eccentricity of his walk, manner, or costume were ineffectual : the parts entrusted to him became gradually more and more unimportant, one of the last personages represented by him being a Russian servant in *Yelza*, who hardly says a word (if, indeed, he be not altogether dumb) throughout the piece.

Had Rébard remained longer at the Gymnase, he might possibly have been reduced to play the *figurants*; as it is, by resuming his old posi-



tion at the Variétés, he at all events brings his drollery to a better market. If he be not a gainer by the change, most certainly he cannot be a loser.

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ROMAND (CASIMIR).

A very serviceable actor, who plays a great variety of characters, and some of them extremely well.

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BRESSANT (M<sup>lle</sup>).

M<sup>lle</sup> Bressant, formerly M<sup>lle</sup> Augustine Dupont, was born somewhere about 1820, and has been a member of the Variétés ever since the age of eleven years, at which period of her life she was engaged to play children's parts. At seventeen she married Bressant, the talented *jeune premier* of the Gymnase, and has by him one daughter. The first character personated by her after her marriage was that of a young girl in *l'Étudiant et la Grande Dame*, and she has since played in most of the best pieces produced at the Variétés, among others in *le Mariage au Tambour*, *Monseigneur*, *le Diable à Quatre*, and *l'Abbé Galant*. One of her most recent creations is *Claudine* in *Gentil Bernard*, which she performs in a very lively and spirited manner.

M<sup>lle</sup> Bressant is short in stature, and rather inclined to *embonpoint*: she treads the stage with ease and grace, sings the *couplet* very fairly, and is on the whole an agreeable and meritorious actress.

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CHAVIGNY (M<sup>lle</sup>).

M<sup>lle</sup> Chavigny has as yet exhibited no great proof of dramatic talent; she is, however, decidedly superior to her comrades M<sup>lle</sup> Charlotte and M<sup>lle</sup> Chataignez.





*Original*

Few if any actresses, French or English, can be said to have enjoyed a more lasting or more deserved popularity than Virginie Déjazet, the Sophie Arnould of her day. Years, we are afraid even to hint at how many, have elapsed since the commencement of her theatrical career: she has counted among her contemporaries Talma, Larive, Contat, Raucourt, Duchesnois, Mars, Dazincourt, Fleury, Paul, Martin, Vestris, Gavaudan, Brunet, Potier, and a hundred other celebrities, most of whom have long since "shuffled off this mortal coil;" and yet she herself, a second Ninon de Lenclos, still remains to us as a connecting link between the past and the present centuries, between Republican France and the era of Louis Philippe.

We believe it to be generally admitted that M<sup>lle</sup> Déjazet's first appearance on any stage (†) took place at the age of four years, in a little theatre situated in what was then called the *Jardin des Capucines*, on the site of part of the present Rue de la Paix. There she became successively *dansseuse* and actress of *travesti* parts, and it was during her Terpsichorean career that the following circumstance occurred. At the head of the police of the theatre was a tall veteran with very fierce mustachios, whose office it was to stand sentinel in the *coulisses* immediately adjoining the stage, and to whom Déjazet for some reason or other had taken an invincible dislike. One evening, as she was in the act of making her *entrée*, this military giant, approaching her with a most portentous frown, so alarmed the little *dansseuse* that she went on the stage sobbing, and so excited the sympathy of her audience, to whom the cause of her grief was a mystery, that she was literally overwhelmed with bouquets. This kind reception, however, did not entirely satisfy her, and she half said, half sobbed, as she re-entered the *coulisses*, "I don't want any more of their flowers, because I must cry before I get them."

After playing a few months at the Théâtre des Capucines, our heroine quitted it first for the Théâtre des Jeunes Elèves in the Rue de Bondy,

(†) One of her biographers indeed says that she was born in a theatre, but as this assertion is unsupported by proof, we consider ourselves justified, like the man in the "Pacha of many Tales," in "very much doubting the fact."

and subsequently for that in the Rue Dauphine. We then find her engaged at the Vaudeville, and later still at the Variétés, where she obtained great success in *Quinze Ans d'Absence*, and from whence, after visiting professionally Lyons and Bordeaux, she transferred her youthful talents to the Gymnase, which theatre, thanks to Léontine Fay, was at that time enjoying an unexampled prosperity. There *le Mariage Enfantin*, *la Petite Sœur*, and numerous other pieces, in many of which the two *petites merveilles* appeared together, afforded M<sup>lle</sup> Déjazet constant opportunities of increasing her already brilliant reputation, and rendered her subsequent departure to the Nouveautés a subject of great regret to the *habitués* of the Théâtre de Madame.

Quitting in its turn the Nouveautés, where she had successively personated *Henri IV.*, *Henri V.*, and *Bonaparte*, for the Palais Royal, she there commenced that series of admirable creations which have stamped her as one of the best and most versatile actresses that have ever adorned the French stage, so rich in illustrations of every kind. To whom, indeed, does not the very name of Déjazet recall to mind a host of by-gone celebrities, on whom her exquisite talent has conferred a new and brighter lustre! The elegant Richelieu, the irresistible Lectorière, the syren Favart, the witty Sophie Arnould, nay, even Voltaire and Jean-Jacques Rousseau, have each and all been portrayed by her with life-like accuracy. Nor is she contented with merely personating characters who have actually existed; she must also create, and with an originality, a truth to Nature unrivalled. *Frétillon*, *la Marquise de Prétintaille*, *Suzanne*, *Vert-Vert*, *la Comtesse du Tonneau*, *la Maitresse de Langues*, in short, the brightest gems of the Palais Royal *répertoire*, owe their popularity to her, and to her alone. In *Sous Clé* she has proved her ability to keep her audience in constant good humour for nearly an hour, unaided by any other performer, a feat only partially equalled by Arnal in *Passé Minuit*.

Next to the male dress, in which she is more at home than most lords of the creation themselves, the *grisette's* apron or peasant's cap suit her best: she adopts not only the costume of the personage assumed by her, but the nature and spirit also, one of her chief merits being the utter absence of monotony or sameness in her acting. She has a peculiar way of saying what no one but her would dare to

say, and yet, so exactly does she know how far she may safely go, that she never positively infringes, however narrowly she may escape doing so, the strict laws of decorum. The most trivial and vapid dialogue in her mouth is invested with point and brilliancy, and the dulllest and most insipid plot, animated by her surprising *verve* and intelligence, becomes both interesting and amusing. She has never been pretty, but her eye is singularly penetrating and expressive: her voice has always been remarkable for a certain shrillness, but yet she sings with a purity of intonation and even an occasional melody which many practised vocalists might envy. There is no sentiment, grave or gay, that she is incapable of expressing with wondrous reality; and she possesses in an eminent degree the power of drawing tears as well as smiles from her audience, though it must be owned that the former prerogative is but sparingly exercised by her. No actress dresses better or more appropriately: she is not one of those who imagine that the simple cotton gown of a *grisette* harmonizes admirably with diamond ear-rings or a massive bracelet; on the contrary, she invariably adapts the costume to the character, never sacrificing, like too many of her contemporaries, the character to the costume.

M<sup>lle</sup> Déjazet is not only one of the most distinguished actresses, but also one of the wittiest women of her day; were all her clever sayings collected together, they would form a volume far exceeding in bulk the famous "Arnouldiana," in which are chronicled the liveliest sallies and repartees of the no less celebrated *Sophie*. We have but little space for quotation; nevertheless, a few specimens of our heroine's table talk, selected from different publications, may possibly amuse the reader.

On its being once remarked in her presence that she always appeared gay and in good spirits, she replied, "It is because I have sense enough to be only sad at home."

A bookseller tried to persuade her to write her memoirs, saying that it would make the fortunes of both. She, however, declined complying with his request. "What can be your motive?" he asked her repeatedly. "Do you dislike the trouble? if so, I will write for you." "Sir," answered she, "rightly or wrongly, I have the reputation of being clever; would you have me lose it?"

Speaking of Italian singing, she observed that "the embroidery was worth more than the material."

A would-be prude remarked one day in her hearing: "I am very particular about my reputation." "You are always particular about trifles," replied Déjazet.

We repeat, a collection of her *bons mots* would fill a volume, and what better title could be devised for such a work than "Déjazetiana!"

Mere wit, however, even though accompanied by the most brilliant talents, is not sufficient of itself to ensure to its possessor that unbounded popularity, as well on the stage as in private life, which is enjoyed in so remarkable a degree by M<sup>lle</sup> Déjazet. Her celebrity as an *artiste* might justly entitle her to the admiration of her audience, but far other qualities are necessary to merit their esteem. It is her kind and amiable nature, her unfailing liberality and goodness of heart, that have made her the universal favourite she is; it is her ready zeal to co-operate in every way towards the relief of those among her comrades whom age or sickness may have rendered incapable of supporting themselves by their own exertions; it is her willing sympathy, her unobtrusive generosity, which have earned her the respect and goodwill of all who can appreciate real worth, and who are not too proud to take a lesson in benevolence and Christian charity from a member of that profession, which it is still too much the fashion to vilify and despise.

M<sup>lle</sup> Déjazet's career at the Variétés dates from February 24, 1845, when she made her first appearance there in her favourite character of *Richelieu*. She has since added two or three creations to her *répertoire*, the most successful being *Gentil Bernard*, a piece which bids fair to become as popular as *Vert-Vert* or *Léonorine*.

A son of this inimitable actress, M. Eugène Déjazet, has attained some celebrity as a musical composer, and her daughter (who was, we believe, originally intended for the Opéra Comique) appeared at the St. James's Theatre, in 1844, under the name of M<sup>lle</sup> Herminie.

ERNEST (M<sup>me</sup> PAUL).

M<sup>me</sup> Paul Ernest was born in 1823, and commenced her theatrical career at Ghent. From thence she went to Liège, and was subsequently engaged for two years at the French theatre in Berlin. On her return to France, after accompanying Paul, the ex-actor of the Gymnase, in a provincial tour, she made a successful *début* at the Variétés, her engagement at which theatre extends, we believe, to April, 1847.

M<sup>me</sup> Paul Ernest, without being pretty, is decidedly an agreeable actress; her voice, though of no great scope or volume, is pleasing, and her manner and deportment are quiet and lady-like. She has neither sufficient physical strength nor sufficient animation for such parts as *la Fille de l'Avare*, but is seen to advantage in lighter characters, such as *Mini Pinson* in the piece of that name, and *la Marquise de Sombreuse* in *Gentil Bernard*.

FLORE (M<sup>lle</sup>).

The best representative of the *jeune du peuple* in general, and the *portière* in particular, on the French stage. M<sup>lle</sup> Flore has been justly called *l'enfant des Variétés*, her first words having been lisped in that theatre, whither her mother, employed there under the management of M<sup>lle</sup> Montansier, brought her every night. At that time M<sup>lle</sup> Mars, then aged thirteen or fourteen, was playing with Baptiste the younger in *le Désespoir de Jocrisse*, in which piece these two celebrated *artistes* were subsequently succeeded by Brunet and our heroine.

When fifteen years of age, M<sup>lle</sup> Flore was permitted to appear in parts originally created by M<sup>lle</sup> Guizot, an actress of some reputation in those days: her first essays were but moderately successful, owing to a defect of pronunciation which she is said to have eventually overcome, like Demosthenes, by holding pebbles in her mouth. She has never been so much at home in pathetic as in comic characters: though she *can* play with feeling and sentiment, she is more at her ease in broad farce, her



joyial good-humoured countenance being far better adapted to smiles than tears. The creation of *Madame Fratche-Marée* in *la Marchande de Goujons* first brought M<sup>lle</sup> Flore into notice, and her subsequent performance of *Victorine* in *les Cuisinières* placed her among the leading actresses of the Variétés.

About this time (says her biographer, M. Dumersan) she inspired a young man with so violent a passion that, finding her virtue unassailable, he resolved to carry her off, and so far succeeded in his object as to confine her in a room sufficiently isolated to prevent her cries from being heard. She continued obdurate, notwithstanding, and her *amorado*, who had hitherto never left her even for a moment without carefully locking the door after him, became on the third day so incensed by her repeated refusals to listen to him, that he vowed he would shoot himself if she persisted in her resolution. Flore in her turn declared that if he did not let her go, she would throw herself out of the window, a threat which silenced him for a time, and enabled her during his absence to dress up the bolster of her bed in some of her clothes, and conceal it behind the window curtain. When her persecutor returned, and recommenced his entreaties, she ran hastily to the window, opened it, and hiding herself behind the curtain, threw the bolster into the street. Down rushed the alarmed lover, with Flore unknown to him at his heels : by the time he had discovered the cheat, his cruel charmer was safely out of his reach.

This excellent actress has not always remained constant to one theatre : in 1826 she quitted the Variétés, first for the Vaudeville, and subsequently for the Odéon, but has long since returned to the scene of her early triumphs. She is now one of the best *duègnes* in Paris, M<sup>mes</sup> Desmousseaux and Guillemin alone being capable of sustaining a comparison with her. Among the many pieces whose success has been partly, if not wholly, due to her exertions, we may mention *la Femme du Peuple*, *les Saltimbanques*, *les Belles Femmes de Paris*, and more recently *Madame Panache*.

M<sup>lle</sup> Flore, though by no means tall, appears shorter than she really is, owing to a very decided tendency to *embonpoint*, which threatens eventually to render her a formidable rival to *Lepeintre jeune*, whom she already resembles in the gaiety of her character and the amiability of

her disposition. Not very long ago she published her own memoirs, a work abounding in amusing anecdote and interesting *souvenirs*.

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GRAVE (M<sup>lle</sup> ANNA).

A pretty woman and an agreeable performer, who, after a temporary absence from the Variétés, re-appeared there in May, 1845, as *Oscar* in *les Vieux Péchés*. She has fine expressive eyes and beautiful hair, which she occasionally wears in long thick curls, a *coiffure* by no means generally adopted by French women, but which is in her case extremely becoming. M<sup>lle</sup> Anna Grave played during the season of 1846 in London, where she is deservedly a favourite, both as actress and *jolie femme*.

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JOLIVET (M<sup>lle</sup>).

We never saw this actress, who has been several years at the Variétés, to such advantage as in the character of the wife (we forget the name of the personage) in *l'Homme qui bat sa Femme* (Vernet acting the husband), in which part she displayed a degree of spirit and liveliness far from usual with her.

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JUDITH (M<sup>lle</sup>).

Early in 1834, two little girls, the one about six or seven years of age, the other rather older, both of the Jewish persuasion, excited the applause and admiration of the *habités* of the Théâtre du Panthéon in the Rue Saint Jacques by their spirited performance of children's parts. The elder of these youthful *débutantes* was M<sup>lle</sup> Sara Félix, sister of M<sup>lle</sup> Rachel, and herself an actress of merit; the younger, the subject of the present notice, M<sup>lle</sup> Judith Bernat.

After passing the intervening period between childhood and early womanhood in a *pension*, M<sup>lle</sup> Judith recommenced her dramatic career at the Théâtre Molière, where she played among other parts *Christine* in *Michel et Christine*, and *Louise* in *le Mûle Imaginaire*. The success she obtained encouraged her to apply to M. Poirson, then manager of the Gymnase, for an engagement; but the terms offered her were so extremely low that she at once forsook the Boulevard Bonne Nouvelle for the Folies Dramatiques, where she was engaged to replace M<sup>lle</sup> Nathalie. Her *début* took place in *Michaëla*, one of her predecessor's best creations, and she acquitted herself so well of her task as at once to make the frequenters of the Folies forget the loss of their favourite actress in their joy at finding so excellent a substitute. This success was speedily followed by her able performance of *Pauline* in *Amour et Amourette*, in which character she displayed dramatic qualities of a very high order. We may also cite among the productions most indebted to her talent for the brilliant career they enjoyed *le Maître Maçon et le Banquier*, and *les Premières Armes du Diable* (first produced November 19, 1844), in which her *Rose Marie* was a finished and truthful piece of acting.

Early in 1845, M<sup>lle</sup> Judith quitted the Folies Dramatiques for the Variétés, where she first appeared by the side of Bouffé as *Eugénie Grandet* in *la Fille de l'Arc*. Her reception was most encouraging, and she has since rapidly gained ground in public favour, although from the lack of good pieces produced at this theatre she has had little opportunity of distinguishing herself. As yet her best creation is *Suzanne* in *Deux Compagnons du Tour de France*; but the part is too unimportant to afford much scope of acting.

M<sup>lle</sup> Judith, from being a pretty girl, has become a handsome woman; her lustrous black eyes are remarkably expressive, and her figure, though slightly inclining to *embonpoint*, is not the less admirably proportioned. She sings agreeably and in tune, a rare merit at this theatre, and her utterance is unusually clear and distinct; she possesses, moreover, a fund of energy, sensibility, and natural pathos, which, except in the piece chosen for her *début*, have never been displayed to advantage: since her engagement at the Variétés (1).

(1) Since the above was written, M<sup>lle</sup> Judith has been engaged at the Théâtre Français.

LAGIER (M<sup>lle</sup>).

M<sup>lle</sup> Honorine Lagier made her first appearance at the Variétés July 1, 1846, as *Arthémise* in *la Veuve de Quinze Ans*, being, it is said, only fourteen years old herself. She is not exactly a prodigy, but has an excellent *tenue*, and acts with grace, *naïveté*, and vivacity.

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LOBRY (M<sup>lle</sup>).

An ex-actress of the Gymnase, who made her *début* at the Variétés June 2, 1846, as *Alice* in *la Carotte d'Or*. M<sup>lle</sup> Lobry has fine eyes, and sings with taste and expression.

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MARQUET (M<sup>lle</sup> DELPHINE).

We congratulate M. Roqueplan on the very agreeable addition he has lately made to his company in the person of M<sup>lle</sup> Delphine Marquet, who, not content with exhibiting excellent pantomimic qualities in *la Péri* and *la Muette* at the Académie Royale, has, by her graceful performance of *Louise* in *la Baronne de Blignac*, in which character she first appeared at the Variétés, June 6, 1846, taken her place among the most promising young actresses of the day.

M<sup>lle</sup> Marquet has a slight and elegant figure, pretty eyes, a most fascinating smile, and an extremely lady-like manner. Her voice is somewhat thin, but not unpleasing, and she acts with an easy self-possession and a playful coquetry seldom met with in a *débutante*.

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MAYER (M<sup>lle</sup>).

M<sup>lle</sup> Désirée Mayer, sister of M<sup>lle</sup> Louise Mayer, the once celebrated

*ingénue* of the Vaudeville, made her *début* at the Variétés in July, 1845, as *Louise* in *le Chevalier du Guet*. She is rather short, and, except a pair of fine eyes, has little pretension to beauty; but she acts smartly, and makes the most of a weak but agreeable voice.

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PITRON (M<sup>lle</sup>).

A pretty little actress, with a Chinese face, an elegant figure, and a lively *gentille* manner. As *Fanchon* in *Gentil Bernard* she sang and acted charmingly, so charmingly indeed that since she has abandoned the part to one of her *camarades*, the piece has lost half its attraction.

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POTEL (M<sup>lle</sup> PAULINE).

A very clever and promising young actress, who first appeared at the Variétés September 30, 1846, as *Anais* in *le Père de la Déroutante*.

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SAINT MARC (M<sup>lle</sup>).

M<sup>lle</sup> Eugénie Saint Marc first appeared at the *Gymnase Enfantin* in 1834; she was then seven years old. In 1840 she was engaged at the Vaudeville, and continued there until the summer of 1845, when she seceded from the company, and in the November following made a successful *début* at the St. James's Theatre, where she played with but little intermission during the greater part of the season of 1846.

M<sup>lle</sup> Saint Marc is now about nineteen years of age, and her face and figure are both extremely youthful: she has pretty eyes, a sweet smile, fair hair, and a delicate complexion, and her voice is distinct and musical. While at the Vaudeville she occasionally played, during the

absence of M<sup>me</sup> Doche, *Satan*, and other creations of that charming actress, and, taking into consideration the difficulties of the task, acquitted herself very fairly. She is seen to great advantage in light comedy and vaudeville, and has even attempted drama with some success; nor must we forget her clever and intelligent performance, while in London, of *Henriette* in *les Femmes Savantes*, on which occasion she showed herself far more capable of interpreting Molière than many a *pensionnaire* (we might almost add *sociétaire*) of the Théâtre Français. M<sup>lle</sup> Saint Marc has not yet (October 16, 1846) made her *début* at the Variétés.

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THIBAUT (M<sup>me</sup>).

A good representative of elderly ladies, and more especially of the *Marquises* and *Comtesses* of the *ancien régime*, her tall and imposing figure appearing to great advantage in the costume of the olden time.

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Among the best pieces now played at the Variétés, including the *répertoire* of Bouffé, are the following :

Le Gamin de Paris.  
 Le Père Turlututu.  
 Michel Perrin.  
 L'Oncle Baptiste.  
 La Fille de l'Avare.  
 Les Vieux Péchés.  
 Les Enfants de Troupe.  
 L'Abbé Galant.  
 La Maison en Loterie.  
 La Carotte d'Or.  
 Le Maître d'École.  
 Le Capitaine Roquefinette.  
 Le Chevalier du Guet.

La Meunière de Marly.

Le Père de la Débutante.

La Neige.

Les Saltimbanques.

La Servante Justifiée.

Madame Gibou et Madame Pochet.

L'Homme qui bat sa Femme.

Prosper et Vincent.

L'Ours et le Pacha.

Les Premières Armes de Richelieu.

Gentil Bernard.

## CHAPTER IX.

### GYMNASÉ DRAMATIQUE.

BOULEVARD BONNE-NOUVELLE.

*Manager, M. Lemoine Montigny.*

This theatre was erected in 1819, on the site of the ancient cemetery Bonne-Nouvelle, and opened December 23, 1820, with a prologue, called *le Boulevard Bonne-Nouvelle*, written by Scribe, Mélesville, and Moreau. Its founder, to whom the privilege was accorded by Louis XVIII., was M. de Laroserie, and by him the management of the theatre was entrusted to Messrs. Delestre-Poirson and Cerfbeer, Dormeuil, the present manager of the Palais Royal, being *régisseur général*. The company was at first, according to the express terms of the privilege, composed for the most part of young pupils of the Conservatoire, and the *répertoire* of some old pieces, belonging to the Théâtre Français and Opéra Comique, abridged into one act. In fact, the Gymnase was originally intended, as its name sufficiently indicates, merely as a kind of preparatory school for dramatic aspirants, from whence the most promising actors and actresses were to be occasionally transplanted to the different royal theatres.

The success, however, of the new experiment was very indifferent, notwithstanding the talent of Perlet and Bernard Léon, the only two actors of any celebrity in the *troupe*. The first-named excellent *artiste* was subsequently compelled to leave the Gymnase, owing to his refusal



to accept an engagement at the Théâtre Français; the decree signed by Napoleon at Moscow empowering the *sociétaires* to recruit their company from the minor theatres, and in the event of any actor's declining to join them, to forbid his appearing on any other stage in the capital. Perlet, thus exiled from Paris, was more than recompensed in a pecuniary point of view by the immense success he obtained, first in the provinces, and afterwards in London. He married the daughter of Tiercelin, and has long since retired into private life. Few performers ever attained a greater or more deserved popularity; he and Potier being generally regarded as the most perfect actors of their day.

M. Delestre-Poirson, for many years the manager of the Gymnase, is the son of a clever geometrician, and is himself a man of literary attainments, being author of several dramatic productions performed at the Odéon, Vaudeville, and Porte Saint Martin. Greatly embarrassed at first by the limited nature of the privilege conferred on him, he soon found means of gradually putting aside the worn-out pieces imposed upon him, and of producing more lucrative novelties, though up to September 8, 1824, he was continually threatened with the reduction of his *répertoire* to what were termed the classic limits. At this epoch the Gymnase took the name of *Théâtre de Madame*, a title which originated in the following circumstance. M. Poirson, with a gallantry which did him credit, had profited by the Duchesse de Berry's temporary sojourn at Dieppe to send thither a portion of his company for the amusement of Her Royal Highness; an attention which so pleased the Duchess, that she signified her intention of henceforth taking the theatre under her especial patronage, and, what was more, kept her word. From this time until 1830 the *Théâtre de Madame* ranked immediately after the royal theatres, before the Vaudeville and, the Variétés; and, thanks to its protectress, the limited privilege was entirely done away with, and some of the best pieces of its present *répertoire* produced.

The company then consisted of Gontier, one of the most versatile and esteemed performers of his day, Ferville, Paul, Numa, Legrand, M<sup>lle</sup> Léontine Fay, Jeuny Vertpré, Jenny Colon, Déjazet, and many other celebrated *artistes* (1), by whom Scribe's charming comedies were

(1) Including Allan, Dormeuil, M<sup>me</sup> Théodore and Grévedon, and M<sup>lle</sup> Béranger, surnamed, from her extreme beauty, *Béranger la jolie*.

interpreted in the most admirable manner. After these came Bouffé, and with him *le Gamin de Paris*, *Michel Perrin*, and *la Fille de l'Arrière*; Volnys (1), and M<sup>lle</sup> Julienne, one of the best *duègnes* the French stage has ever boasted (2).

The revolution of July caused the tricoloured flag to wave over the Gymnase, now no longer *Théâtre de Madame*; but the prosperity of the theatre underwent no diminution owing to the change of name. On the contrary, the receipts continued to be most satisfactory until in an evil hour for himself M. Poirson quarrelled with the Dramatic Authors' Association, the members of which in consequence withdrew all their pieces from the theatre, leaving the Gymnase almost without a *répertoire*. Aided by Fournier, and one or two young dramatists, the manager struggled for some time against his powerful enemies, but a continued succession of bad houses and the departure of his last hope, Bouffé, to the Variétés, compelled him at length to abdicate in favour of the present director, M. Montigny (3).

With a new manager commenced a new era for the Gymnase: the same authors, whose opposition had ruined M. Poirson, not only hastened to restore to his successor the ancient *répertoire* of the theatre, but also contributed a long list of novelties, some of which, *Rebecca*, for instance, and *Un Changement de Main*, have attained a popularity which may vie with that of *Malvina* and *les Premiers Amours*. M. Montigny since his accession has lost Rbozevil (4), M<sup>lle</sup> Fargueil (5), and M<sup>lle</sup> Natha-

(1) This very intelligent and gentlemanly actor, whose real name is Charles Joly, made his first *début* at the Théâtre Français in 1828, and subsequently played at the Odéon, Nouveautés, and Vaudeville, where he was the original *Duc de Cherréaux* in *le Duc sous Richelieu*. After his marriage with Léonine Fay, he accompanied her to the Français, and was afterwards re-engaged with her at the Gymnase, since her departure from which theatre he has acted nowhere.

(2) This excellent actress died suddenly in August, 1843.

(3) Formerly manager and actor of the Gaîté, and author of several successful pieces.

(4) In 1829, Rbozevil began his dramatic career in the provinces, and on the opening of the Folies Dramatiques, in 1831, was engaged there as *jeune premier*. In 1831, he became a member of the Gymnase, and remained there eleven years, during which time he not only succeeded Pasi in most of his favourite characters, but also created many original parts, and among others *Ferdinand* in *Maurice*, and *Amédée* in *la Grand'mère*. He has been thrice engaged at the St. James's Theatre, viz. in 1843, 1844, and 1846, and by his clever and gentlemanly acting has become a very general favourite with the *habitues*. We cannot but regret, however, his absence from Paris, where good *amoureux* are so rare.

(5) M<sup>lle</sup> Anais Fargueil was originally intended for the Opéra Comique, and indeed made

lie; but as he has replaced them by Achard, Bressant, Ferville, Geoffroy, Montdidier, M<sup>lle</sup> Sauvage, Meley, Irma Aubry, and Marthe, he has, numerically speaking, no cause to complain.

## THE COMPANY.

### ACHARD.

This *popular* actor in the strict sense of the word was born at Lyons, November 4, 1808, and is the son of a silk-weaver, who intended him to follow the same trade. The shuttle and the loom, however, were not to our hero's taste, his thoughts and wishes, even from the early age of ten years, being wholly centred on the stage. To such an extent, indeed, did he carry this dramatic monomania, that he was in the constant habit of saving up his scanty earnings and paying his place in *Paradis* at the Théâtre des Célestins, taking care to be among the first to enter after the opening of the doors. There he sat, inhaling the odour of the gas, and staring with rapture at the chandelier, boxes, and curtain until the sound of the *trois coups* (1) warned him that the performances were about to commence. Then away he rushed downstairs, and sold his ticket a trifle cheaper than the regular price to the first customer he could find, thus recovering most of his money, by which means he was enabled at little expense to himself to visit the theatre for several successive nights.

her *début* there, but, being partially deprived of her voice by a severe illness, quitted that theatre for the Vandeville, where in *le Démon de la Nuit*, *Le Secret*, and many other pieces, she attained considerable celebrity, as well on account of her beauty as of her intelligent and lady-like acting.

Leaving the Vaudeville for the Palais Royal, she there created *la Fille de Figaro* with immense success, and shortly after accepted an engagement at the Gymnase, where, with the exception of *Marie Rognon*, a piece revived expressly for her and Bernard Léon, scarcely a character of any importance was entrusted to her.

M<sup>lle</sup> Farnueil, since her accession from this theatre, has forsaken Paris for the provinces, but we hope that the capital will not be long deprived of the presence of one of the most agreeable and most insinuating actresses of her day.

(1) Three knocks given by the *regisseur* in the *couffeur* as a hint that the curtain is about to rise.

This tantalizing enjoyment satisfied him for some time, especially as he was now and then lucky enough to see the curtain rise a little, in order to admit of the stage being swept. But the mystic regions behind the scenes soon began to hold out an irresistible temptation to the stage-struck youth, and with the view of gradually making acquaintance with some *jeune premier* or *père noble* he frequented the *Café des Comédiens*, where the actors were wont to assemble. He eventually succeeded beyond his warmest hopes, not only obtaining his *entrée* to the *coulisses* of the *Célestins*, but being also permitted to take a part in some performances got up by an amateur company. This was shortly followed by a public *début* at his favourite theatre, and the flattering reception he experienced determined his future career in life: a few months after he accompanied a small *troupe* to Lons-le-Saulnier, rich in hope but poor in pocket. A fortnight, however, had scarcely elapsed when the company, being unable to agree about the division of parts, separated by mutual consent, and Achard returned home, imagining that he was cured of his dramatic propensity. A short experience of the pleasures of silk-weaving soon convinced him of the contrary, and he gladly accepted an offer made him by the manager of the Grenoble theatre, who only wanted a low comedian to complete his troop. "On one condition I will engage you," said the *impresario*, "namely, that on a pinch you will consent to play the lovers. "With the greatest pleasure in life," cried Achard, "and the fathers into the bargain, if you wish it." The terms were soon settled, and the manager agreed to furnish his new recruit with a supply of costumes, his wardrobe then consisting solely of a bad wig and a pair of very indifferent "unwhisperables."

Achard's good star was now in the ascendant, and henceforward all went well with him. After playing with great success at Grenoble, Saint Etienne, Lyons, and Bordeaux, he made a most brilliant *début* at the Palais Royal, July 10, 1834, in *Lionel and le Connais et la Grisette*. His career at that theatre was long and prosperous, and his secession from the company, shortly followed by that of M<sup>lle</sup> Déjazet, caused for a time a very material diminution in the receipts of M. Dormeuil's snug little *bonbonnière*.

Achard made his *début* at the Gymnase in the summer of 1844, and

is, we believe, engaged there at the large salary of 25,000 francs (£1,000) a-year. Among the pieces which have been expressly written for him at this theatre are *Babiole et Joblot*, *la Vie en Partie Double*, and *le Petit Homme Gris*; but none of them have attained the popularity of some of his former creations, such as *Bruno le Filleur*, and *Indiana et Charlemagne*. The fact is, Achard's place is not at the Gymnase; neither the kind of pieces in which he appears to advantage, nor his own peculiar style of acting, can ever be fairly appreciated by an audience accustomed to the charming little comedies of Scribe or Bayard, and to the refined performance of a Bressant or a Rose Chéri. Even his singing, once so unfailing a magnet of attraction, is now comparatively disregarded, and as if to mark in a most unmistakable manner the trifling estimation in which his talents are held, he is seldom allowed to act except in the first or last pieces, which in the former case always, and in the latter very often, is equivalent to playing to empty benches. This is unfair, both towards the *artiste* and towards that portion of the public by whom he is understood and admired; and we almost wonder that he has not followed the example of M<sup>me</sup> Doche, and cancelled an engagement which ought never to have been signed. The charming actress in question has been amply rewarded for all the annoyances experienced by her at the Gymnase by the hearty welcome she has received from the *habitués* of the Vaudeville; why should not Achard have the same luck in store for him at the Palais Royal?

We have already said in commencing this article that Achard is, in the strictest sense of the word, a *popular* actor, his rather boisterous gaiety and broad humour being far more intelligible to the masses than the amusing but more refined comedy of Numa and Klein. Again, he has always succeeded best in characters, the types of which are selected from among the lower classes themselves; as a *funiste*, a *tapis-sier*, or a *hussard* of the *Bal Masqué*, he is in his element; but exchange the workman's dress or the gay *costume de bal* for a plain coat or an embroidered suit, and he is no longer the same individual. He appears as ill at ease in fine clothes as Carlotta Grisi does in her white satin dress in *le Diable à Quatre*; but give him once more his jacket and apron, and "Richard's himself again."

We live in hopes that the engagement at present existing between

M. Montigny and this really excellent low comedian will be speedily broken by mutual consent, and that we shall ere long see the latter resume his old position at the Palais Royal, instead of wasting his time and talents most unprofitably at the Gymnase, where he can be considered as nothing more nor less than a "fish out of water."

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BORDIER.

This actor has from time immemorial played the men servants in and out of livery, from the major-domo to the footman, in a most irreproachable manner. He is tall and steady-looking, and has in every respect the *physique de l'emploi*.

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BRESSANT.

One of the best *jeunes premiers* in Paris, who, after an absence of some years in Russia, has returned to redeem at the Gymnase the promise of future excellence formerly held out by him at the Variétés. Naturally endowed with an expressive and agreeable countenance, a good figure, and a melodious voice, Bressant has also the appearance and manners of a gentleman, an advantage sufficiently rare among *jeunes premiers* of the present day to deserve an especial mention. It is, indeed, more on this account than on any other that we should like to see him at the Théâtre Français, where a fitting representative of the courtly heroes of *la haute comédie* is sadly wanted; and where the most exquisite creations of Molière, Regnard, and Marivaux are frequently entrusted, *faute de mieux*, to the tender mercies of some inexperienced *débutant* just escaped from the Conservatoire, who is about as much at home in the character he undertakes as a Boulevard actress, transplanted from the Ambigu or the Galté, would be in *Hermione* or *Camille*.

Bressant, however, has other and more important claims to public favour: he not only *looks* but *acts* well. His conception of a character

is invariably clever and intelligent, and often extremely felicitous, and his tact is not inferior to his talent. He never falls into the opposite extremes of stiff monotony or vulgar exaggeration; there is always the same dignity, the same gentlemanly ease in his manner and bearing, which few of his contemporaries can equal, and none excel.

His engagement at the Gymnase, where he made his *début* February 21, 1846, as *Maurice* in *Georges et Maurice*, and where, we believe, his salary amounts to 30,000 francs (£ 1,200), is likely to prove a source of great profit to the management, whose company now includes more really good actors (we cannot say as much for all the actresses) than any other in Paris (1).

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#### DELMAS.

An industrious and persevering actor, formerly of the Luxembourg and Panthéon theatres, who, on the departure of Bouffé to the Variétés, was engaged by M. Poirson to supply his place. His success, though not exactly triumphant, was highly encouraging, and his performance of *Daniel le Tambour* was favourably noticed in most of the public journals, one of the *feuilleton* writers concluding his remarks by saying, "Delmas is not a Bouffé, and perhaps never will be; but he will be Delmas, and that is something."

He subsequently played *la Tante Bazu* with great spirit and humour, and has since seconded Achard excellently in *Pascal et Chambord*. If, however, we may judge from the proofs he has already given of a versatile and original talent, equally excellent in drama and in comedy, Delmas only waits for an opportunity to make a still further advance in public favour; and we hope both for his sake and for that of the frequenters of the Gymnase that he will not have to wait long.

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(1) Bressant's *Lorence* in *Clarisse Harlowe* is an admirable creation.



## DESCHAMPS.

Julien Deschamps was once a favourite with the *habitués* of the Belleville theatre; he is now one of the most deservedly popular members of the Gymnase. In appearance he is extremely youthful, and his figure is so slight and boyish that those who did not know to the contrary would take him for a lad still in his teens, and would be inclined to question the possibility of his having been some time a *père de famille*.

Deschamps is one of the best *amoureux* on the French stage: his manners are elegant and agreeable, his voice is low and rather weak, but singularly sweet and expressive, and his acting is easy and natural. We would especially mention his performance of *Frédéric* in *Rébecca*, and of *Félix* in *Un Tuteur de Vingt Ans*, as most able and finished personations, which would do honour to any actor, and which are, nevertheless, only two out of a long list of not less successful creations, with which his talent has adorned the *répertoire* of the Gymnase.

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 FERVILLE.

Louis-Basile Veaucorbeille (Ferville being only an assumed name) was born at Rochefort in February, 1785. His father, who was a theatrical manager, intended his son not for the dramatic but for the musical profession, and our hero's *début* took place at the Théâtre Louvois, where he played a concerto on the violin. On the opening of the Odéon, he was attached as supernumerary to the orchestra, and soon after, bitten with the Thespian mania, and preferring to play on the stage rather than in front of it, he appeared first at the little theatre then existing in the Rue du Bac, and subsequently at the Théâtre de la Foire Saint-Germain, where he was tremendously hissed in *le Désespoir de Jocrisse*, thanks to his father, who, wishing to discourage him, had engaged several of his friends to hiss the young *débutant*, and imagined he had succeeded beyond his hopes. Ferville then took to his violin a second time, and joined a company starting on a provincial tour; but



finding ere long all his resources exhausted, he ventured again to turn actor, and with the greatest success. Soon after, while at Namur, attached to a company consisting chiefly of youths like himself, the following adventure happened to him. The departure of the *troupe* was fixed to take place in two days, but the manager, unwilling to leave the town without drawing at least one good house, resolved on announcing for the next evening *Robert, Chef de Brigands*, a piece then greatly in vogue. Unluckily, the actor who was to play the hero only knew two acts out of the three, and had no time to study the remainder; in his dilemma the manager went to Ferville, who had an inferior part in the piece, and told him that he trusted to his ingenuity to get him out of a scrape. "How so?" said Ferville. "Why, we play *Robert* to-morrow, and we cannot get beyond the end of the second act: you must therefore contrive, just before the curtain drops, to fall as if by accident into the prompter's box. An apology will then be made to the public, and we shall escape playing the third act."

Ferville agreed, and on the following day *Robert* was advertised, and the theatre consequently crammed to the ceiling. The first act was played with immense success, and the second was nearly over when Ferville, pretending to stumble, uttered a cry and disappeared as if by magic. So far all was well; but unfortunately, just as the *régis seur* was in the act of announcing the impossibility of finishing the piece, a medical man who was sitting in the stalls clambered over the orchestra on the stage, and offered his services, declaring that the patient must be bled instantly. In vain the manager ordered Ferville to be carried to his lodgings: the doctor, in spite of a thick fall of snow, followed the litter, and, getting ready his lancet and bandages, prepared for business in a very systematic manner. Poor Ferville looked on with a most rueful eye, and at last, rather than undergo the dreaded operation, decided on telling the truth, to the great indignation of the practitioner, who, vowing that the whole town should be informed of the managerial *ruse*, departed in a huff, leaving our hero barely time to pack up his scanty wardrobe, and quit Namur as fast as his legs would carry him.

In spite of his provincial successes, Ferville was very poor when he came to Paris and took his place in the orchestra of the Théâtre de la Cité, of which his father was then manager. The latter finally relented

so far as to allow his son to be enrolled among the *dramatis personæ* of the company, and on the closing of the theatre Ferville went to Bordeaux, and afterwards to Nantes, where he again found his father exercising the functions of manager. He next visited Brest and Toulouse, playing successively comedy, drama, opera, ballet, and vaudeville. While at Toulouse, he was informed of his engagement at the Gymnase, where he arrived in 1822, immediately after the departure of Perlet. From this time Ferville's progress was rapid: Scribe entrusted him with several important creations, and his name began to be cited among those of the best actors in the capital.

On M. Harel's becoming the manager of the Odéon, our hero joined his company for a short time, but soon returned to the Gymnase, which theatre he subsequently quitted for the Vaudeville, where he was literally shelved. His reappearance at the Gymnase (March 7, 1846) in *la Lectrice* and *la Chanoinesse*, two of his happiest creations, was a source of great delight to all lovers of genuine acting, more especially as during his absence many of the best pieces of the *répertoire* had been laid aside, no other actor being able to replace him.

Ferville is equally popular in his artistic capacity and in private life: he is always spoken of as a strictly honourable man, deserving and obtaining the respect and esteem of all who know him. As an actor, he is equally excellent in comedy and in drama. During his early career at the Gymnase, it was the fashion to introduce a general or other veteran of *la Grande Armée* into almost every piece, and these parts were invariably given to Ferville, whose versatility was such that not one of the forty or fifty officers personated by him could be said to resemble another. As a representative of old men he is without a rival; witness his admirable performance of the venerable husband in *la Pensionnaire Mariée*, which we do not hesitate to rank among the finest pieces of acting now to be seen on any stage. His pathos is simple, impressive, and dignified, his humour frank, buoyant, and communicative: he is, in fact, the man of all others best qualified to invest the delightful creations of Scribe with a new charm, and to render still more attractive the witty and delicate touches of his author by his exquisite manner of interpreting them.

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## GEOFFROY.

This very rising comic actor began his dramatic career in 1838, in the environs of Paris, and subsequently paid a professional visit to Italy, where his lively and original humour was highly relished by the *habitués* of the *Coromero* at Florence and of the *Teatro del Fondo* at Naples. He then went to Rouen, where he staid nearly four years, and was afterwards engaged by M. Montigny at the express recommendation of Scribe. His *début* at the Gymnase took place in the summer of 1844 in *Rodolphe*, and he has since created parts in *les Trois Péchés du Diable*, *Rebecca*, *l'Image*, and several other pieces.

Geoffroy is an actor of great promise : naturally gifted with a flexible countenance, a clear and even musical voice, and a fund of inexhaustible gaiety, he is also entirely free from that besetting sin of comic performers in general—vulgarity. His acting is, indeed, rather remarkable for *esprit* than for drollery, and the pieces of his friend and patron, Scribe, are peculiarly calculated to develope and display to the fullest advantage his mirth-creating powers. He sings agreeably, treads the stage in an easy and unembarrassed manner, and is altogether an excellent acquisition to the company.

## KLEIN.

Born in Paris. His father was a great devotee, and made his son officiate for three years as incense-bearer with a shorn crown and white surplice in the church of Saint Méry. He was afterwards apprenticed to a watchmaker, where he found among his fellow workmen a dramatic enthusiast, who delighted in reciting scraps of Corneille and Racine when his master was out of hearing, and moreover occasionally acted *en amateur*.

Klein was soon bitten with the same mania, and shortly after made his *début* in a little theatre at Montrouge, as *Mascarille* in *le Dépit Amoureux*. Baptiste the younger, then in his glory at the Français, was accidentally a witness of this first appearance, and seeing, or fancying

that he saw, some resemblance between the young actor and himself (possibly because both were tall, thin, and bony), he applauded him, and Klein's future career was decided.

He entered the Conservatoire in 1812, where Perlet and Samson were also studying. He then appeared in *les Jeux Gymniques* at the Porte Saint Martin, where at that time only two performers were allowed to talk on the stage at once, the acting of the rest being confined to pantomime. Notwithstanding this disadvantage, Klein succeeded in attracting the notice of the public, and soon after, the restriction being removed, several melodramas were played there, in one of which, *le Mont Saint Bernard*, he personated a young peasant covered with snow in so life-like and natural a manner as to make the audience shiver at the very sight of him. He was subsequently advised by Potier to accept an engagement at the Ambigu, where he created some sensation by his acting in *la Forêt Périlleuse* and other popular pieces. At length, finding the exertions he had undergone too much for his strength, he retired to Normandy, where he was for some time believed to be dead, but eventually reappeared, and, after playing with success in some of Victor Ducange's pieces, was engaged at the Gymnase. His greatest creation at this theatre has been *le Veau d'Or*, his part in which comedy was originally intended for Bouffé. That actor, however, refused it on the plea of its bearing some resemblance to that of *Grandet* in *la Fille de l'Arbre*, and wrote to Scribe (one of the authors) accordingly. Scribe's reply was very simple. "Sir, M. Ferville has played twelve generals in twelve of my pieces, and not one of his personations in any way resembles another." Upon this the part was given to Numa, who, after carefully reading it, gave it back, saying he doubted whether if Préville were to reappear, even he with all his talent could play it. Rébard then took it, and rehearsed it a dozen times, but his conception of the part was so indifferent that Scribe insisted on its being given to Klein, by whom it was played fifty nights. "Avant *le Veau d'Or*," says a newspaper of the time in allusion to the success of the piece, "Klein était long; maintenant il est grand."

The creations of this excellent actor are legion, and to enumerate them we should be obliged to cite half the *répertoire* of the Gymnase. We may, however, mention *Un Changement de Maître*, and *la Maîtresse de*

*Maison* as among his most recent triumphs, in both of which he is seen to great advantage. Klein is one of those real *artistes* whom it is a pleasure to study : the personages represented by him are not crude and hastily conceived sketches, but finished portraits, on each of which he has bestowed more care and patience than many other actors expend on their entire *répertoire*. He is never imperfect or at a loss, nor are the interests of an author ever endangered by him. His dress, look, and manner are all in harmony with the character he represents, nor is there ever the slightest incongruity visible either in his making up or in his acting. All is at once highly comic, and, as poor Listou used to say, "quite correct."

Both in and out of the theatre Klein enjoys very general and deserved popularity, as well on account of his undeniable talent as of his many excellent private qualities.

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LANDROL (HIPPOLYTE).

A most useful actor, formerly a member of the Bordeaux theatre, and subsequently of the Renaissance, who now plays the comic fathers and other elderly gentlemen with no little humour. The characters entrusted to him sometimes border on the ridiculous, but he has sufficient tact not to indulge in any undue exaggeration. As *Pirouette* in *la Vie en Partie Double*, he is exceedingly droll.

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LANDROL (ALEXANDRE).

A young *amoureux*, son of the foregoing, who made his *début* May 25, 1846, as *Ferdinand* in *le Jardin d'Hiver*.

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MONTDIDIER.

A clever *jeune premier*, formerly attached to the Renaissance, who

made a very successful *début* at the Gymnase, together with M<sup>me</sup> Doche, April 17, 1855, as *Léopold* in *l'Image*, and who has since created *Alexis* in *Un Changement de Main* in a highly creditable manner. He has lately been engaged at the Ambigu, and we sincerely congratulate M. Béraud on his acquisition.

Montdidier, in addition to an agreeable open countenance and a good figure, possesses more life and animation than usually falls to the lot of *jeunes premiers* at the present day, and is at the same time an unaffected and natural actor. His voice is rather harsh and grating, and he has acquired a constant and unpleasant habit of contracting his brows into a frown, the effect of which is by no means personally advantageous to him; but these trifling defects are more than redeemed by the earnestness and genuine feeling of which he has given ample proof in the few creations which have been entrusted to him.

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MONVAL (Léon).

*Régisseur* of the theatre, and a quiet pains-taking actor, one of whose most recent and best creations is the *Marquis de Beauchamp* in *Un Mari qui se dérange*.

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MOREAU-SAINTI (Tudodore).

A tall and fine-looking young man, son of Moreau-Sainti of the Opéra Comique. He first appeared at the Gymnase in October, 1855, in *l'Héréditaire*, and bids fair, with study and perseverance, to become a good *amoureux*.

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NUMA.

Numa, whose real name is Marc Beschefer, was educated at the Lycée

Charlemagne. His father intended him for a tradesman, but finding that his son preferred the stage to the counter, he sent him to the *École de Médecine* in hopes of curing him. "Fathers," says our hero's biographer, "are excellent people in their way; they have but one little failing, that is, their wishes are always directly opposed to those of their sons." This axiom, however questionable as a general rule, was at all events true in the case of Numa, who principally employed the hours which should have been devoted to study in humming *couplets* and reading *le Médecin malgré lui*. At last he carried his point, threw physic to the dogs, and came out at Versailles, where he soon became a prodigious favourite. After remaining there three years, he was engaged to supply the place of Perlet at the Gymnase, and has ever since ranked among the most popular actors of that theatre.

Numa, to a superficial observer, would seem anything rather than what he really is, a most accomplished and finished *artiste*, the great feature of his acting being an impertorbable *sang-froid* and an apparent indifference to everything that is going on around him. He walks about, his hands carelessly thrust into his pockets, and says what he has to say without the least semblance of effort, and with a perfect gravity, which contrasts strangely with the roars of laughter which his peculiar manner excites, and of which he appears wholly unconscious. He seldom smiles himself, even while uttering the most irresistible drolleries, and it is perhaps the extreme composure invariably evinced by him that renders the mirth of his audience the more uproarious. Do not think, however, that this pretended indifference is real, or that the effect of each scene, of each sentence, nay, of each shrug of the shoulder and comic inflexion of the voice, has not been carefully studied beforehand. The chief art of acting consists in the power of concealing every appearance of effort, and this very rare quality no one possesses to a greater extent than Numa.

Among the pieces most indebted to him for their success are *la Demoiselle à Marier*, *l'Ambassadeur*, *Moiroud et Compagnie*, and more recently *Madame de Cérigny*, *Genevieve*, and *Jeanne et Jeanneton*, in which last comedy he has displayed a degree of pathos and sensibility of which his warmest admirers could hardly have supposed him capable.

## PASTELOT.

Generally speaking, the creations entrusted to this actor are of a very secondary order, and little better than what are technically called with us walking gentlemen's parts. Now and then, however, some author takes pity on him, and has seldom reason to repent having done so, for Pastelot is not only an useful but an intelligent performer, and fills up a *bout de rôle* very creditably.

## PÉRES.

A young comic actor of more repute than many of his seniors. Though but recently enrolled among the company, he has contrived to become popular without having had a single part of any importance, simply owing to the peculiar originality of his acting. As a waiter in *Un Mari qui se dérange* he convulsed the house by his perfect imitation of a well-known functionary who officiates at a *café* in the Palais Royal; and it is no discredit to Ferville, Tisserant, and the other actors in this very amusing vaudeville, to say that Péres's performance of a part hardly exceeding a dozen lines in length was *the* feature of the piece.

## SYLVESTRE.

Sylvestre's style of acting is said to bear a distant resemblance to that of Legrand, one of Potier's clever contemporaries; it is farcical rather than comic, and is perhaps more adapted to the *Variétés*, where it was once highly relished, than to the *Gymnase*, where it contrasts strangely enough with the grace of Rose Chéri, the polished manners of Bressant, and the comparatively quiet humour of Klein, Numa, and Tisserant. The mirth-exciting powers of Sylvestre are, however, undeniable, and although we may on reflection regret the occasional



exaggeration which disfigures his acting, we have little leisure or inclination to do so while listening to his most amusing drolleries.

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#### TISSERANT.

We know little of the private history of this actor previous to his becoming a member of the Gymnase company, but we have heard it stated that he is the son of a gardener at Meudon, and that some of his early years were spent in painting on porcelain.

In his dramatic capacity we can speak of him from our own observation. Tisserant is in our opinion one of the most valuable *artistes* of the Gymnase : possessed of an extraordinary flow of animal spirits, and of a frank jovial gaiety, he has also in many of his creations displayed a strong dramatic feeling and a simple unaffected pathos, for which those who have only seen him in his lighter mood would be hardly disposed to give him credit. In *le Diplomate*, *les Fées de Paris*, and *Madame de Cérigny* he is a witty and accomplished comedian; in *la Belle et la Bête*, and *Noémie*, he changes, Proteus-like,

"From gay to grave, from lively to severe,"

and, attacking his audience on their weak side, reaps a harvest of tears where he had formerly contented himself with smiles.

We look upon Tisserant as one of the pillars of the Gymnase ; and were he even not the excellent actor he really is, we should still consider him entitled to our respect, as a worthy and honourable man.

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#### CHÉRI (M<sup>lle</sup> Rosr).

M<sup>lle</sup> Rose Chéri (whose real name is Marie-Rose Chéri Cizos) was born in 1825 at Etampes, in which town her father was at that time attached to an operatic company, under the management of our heroine's grandfather by her mother's side. At a very early age she was renowned for her precocious intelligence and retentive memory,



*Ant. G. G. G.*



being in the constant habit of singing, when hardly four years old, fragments of the *Comte Ory*, and other operas, which she had heard at the theatre.

One year after, in 1830, she acted the part of *Lisette* in *le Roman d'une Heure* for the amusement of her parents (the other two characters being sustained by two of her playmates), and the talent displayed by her was so remarkable that she was encouraged to repeat the essay in public at the theatre of Bourges, on which occasion her infant exertions were rewarded by the enthusiastic applause of the audience, and (what was then probably even more to her taste) by a shower of *bon-bons*.

Two years later, the Chéri family being engaged at Bayonne, a *dérangement* was introduced in *la Muette de Portici*, in which M<sup>lle</sup> Rose Chéri danced a *bolero* (which she had learnt from a Spanish professor) with such grace and precision as to excite universal admiration. From this time her father, anxious to turn her natural talents to some profitable account, taught her the piano, in the hope that she would entirely devote herself to the musical profession. The dramatic instinct, however, was so strong within her, that her only happiness consisted in the study of different characters, and nothing ensured her attention to her musical lessons so much as a promise that she should some day be allowed to act.

In 1834, while at Nevers, M. Chéri permitted his two daughters, Rose and Anna, to learn parts in *le Vieux Garçon*, *la Petite Sœur*, and *le Mariage Enfantin*, in which last piece Rose personated the husband, and Anna the wife. The success of these Lilliputian performers was complete, and their father, who had by this time become manager of a provincial company, visited successively Chartres, Limoges, and several other towns, in each of which the extraordinary precocity of the two sisters (and more especially of Rose) renewed the *furor* which had been formerly created by the juvenile graces of Léontine Fay.

Chartres, Limoges, and Périgueux, however, with all their triumphs, were not Paris; and, in 1842, M<sup>lle</sup> Rose Chéri, anxious to brave the ordeal so much dreaded by provincial celebrities, arrived in the capital, bringing with her a letter of recommendation from a clever vaudeville writer to M. Poirson. He received her favourably, but having little

faith in provincial stars, made her *débüter* (under, we believe, the name of *Marie*) in *Estelle*, a part unsuited to her, and ill calculated to display her talent to advantage. After this, M<sup>lle</sup> Rose Chéri was thought no more of for a time, and might possibly have returned in despair to Périgueux, had not a lucky circumstance at once brought her into notice. During the month of July in the same year, M<sup>lle</sup> Nathalie, who was then acting in *la Jeunesse Orageuse*, being suddenly taken ill, M. Poirson bethought himself of the *débütante* he had hitherto neglected, and bade her study the part for the following evening. She did so, and played it with such grace and natural simplicity, that the press and public were alike enchanted, and her subsequent performance in *le Premier Chapitre* and *le Mariage de Scarron* confirmed the impression already produced in her favour.

M<sup>lle</sup> Rose Chéri's first original creation was *Céline* in the piece of that name, which was followed by one of her great triumphs, *la Marquise de Rautzan*; her acting in this last-named comedy entitled her at once to rank among the best *jeunes premières* in Paris.

The versatility of this charming actress is as remarkable, if not even more so, than her talent; the most opposite characters are represented by her with equal skill and success, as a mere glance at her *répertoire* will show. *Thérèse* in *Georges et Thérèse*, *Alberta I.*, *Emma*, *Rébecca*, *Madame de Cérigny*, *Elizabeth* in *Un Changement de Main*, *Antoinette* in *la Belle et la Bête*, *Geneviève*, *la Mère de Famille*, *Yolva*, and a dozen other parts, prove each in an eminent degree her ability to play comedy, drama, and even pantomime, with what effect those only who have witnessed her performance can fairly comprehend.

M<sup>lle</sup> Rose Chéri has recently paid a visit to London, where her reception was as cordial as her warmest admirers could have wished. Not only were her brilliant dramatic powers appreciated as they deserved, but due justice was also rendered to the many estimable qualities which eminently distinguish her private character, and which have obtained for her the respect and esteem of all who know her. The press were unanimous in her praise, and we make no apology for transcribing here from one or two of our public journals the following passages descriptive of her looks, manner, and acting, which strike us as being peculiarly happy.

A critic in the *Times* alludes thus to *la rose chérie du Gymnase*: "A more genuine talent, or one so nearly approaching perfection in its interpretation of nature, we have never seen. Nature, apart from and to the exclusion of all conventionalism, appears to have been the sole and profound study of M<sup>lle</sup> Chéri, and to have been adopted by her as her only guide. There is a wonderful freshness, consequently, in all she does."

Another writer says: "Her figure is short, but symmetrically formed, and her features, though not strictly handsome, have that prominence which always shows to advantage on the stage. Her mouth is full of expression, and her eye, which is large and convex, is susceptible of melting into softness or firing with indignation. Her movement on the stage is graceful and elegant, and her air perfectly unembarrassed. She has been an actress from her childhood, and, unlike many other precocious prodigies in this or other countries, retains her talent as a woman which astonished when only an infant. Her voice is alike pleasing and impressive; it partakes of the *contr'alto* quality, is liquid, distinct, and full of the finest intonation."

We have little to add to the above excellent description of M<sup>lle</sup> Rose Chéri beyond expressing our own sincere admiration as well of her public qualities as of her private virtues. At the present day, when it is so much the fashion to consider every actress, merely because she is an actress, and without caring or seeking to inquire as to the truth of the accusation, as belonging to a systematically vicious and abandoned class, it is refreshing to be able to point out a few exceptions to the rule so arbitrarily and uncharitably laid down, exceptions who are alike an honour to their sex and to the profession of which they are members. Such an exception is M<sup>lle</sup> Rose Chéri, and we would fain believe and hope that many of her contemporaries have an equal right to the title. It does not necessarily follow that because an actress may possess the talent of a Clairon or of a Sophie Arnould, she should in imitating their qualities imitate also their defects; nor, as we may see in the case of M<sup>lle</sup> Rose Chéri, is excellence on the stage incompatible with modesty or domestic worth (1).

(1) Since the above was written, M<sup>lle</sup> Rose Chéri has achieved a new and brilliant triumph in *Clarissa Harlowe*.

CHÉRI (M<sup>lle</sup> ANNA).

What we have said of M<sup>lle</sup> Rose Chéri is in a great measure applicable to M<sup>lle</sup> Anna, who is the younger of the two by one year, having been born in 1826. She is already a very pleasing actress, and promises to follow still more closely in the track of her sister, than whom she could not have a better model.

DÉSIRÉE (M<sup>lle</sup>).

M<sup>lle</sup> Désirée is a pupil of M<sup>lle</sup> Jenny Vertpré, under whose auspices, we believe, she made her first *début* at Passy, some three or four years ago, in *la Demoiselle à Marier*. The success obtained by her on this occasion procured her the offer of an engagement from M. Montigny, then manager of the Galté; her instructress, however, advised her to decline it, and subsequently prevailed on M. Poirson to engage her for the Gymnase.

For some time after her *début* there she remained altogether unnoticed, and beyond a few trifling parts in *la Marquise de Rantzau*, *Daniel le Tambour*, and one or two other pieces, had no opportunity of improving her acquaintance with the public; but on the management of the theatre falling into the hands of M. Montigny, who had not forgotten the *débutante* of Passy, she was suddenly withdrawn from her obscurity, and the best authors of the day, including even Scribe himself, did not disdain to write for her.

Scarcely had she appeared in *les Surprises* when the whole play-going public were in raptures with her grace, her *gentillesse*, and the lively piquancy of her manner. Nothing was talked of but M<sup>lle</sup> Désirée, even Rose Chéri herself being for a time almost neglected for the new idol! Every fresh creation was esteemed a marvel, every piece entrusted to her was considered a *chef-d'œuvre*. Her *naïveté* as *Giannina* in *Rebecca*, her versatility as *Sizérin* in *les Trois Péchés du Diable*, and her coquettish simplicity in *Babiole* and *Joblot* were commented on with astonishing perseverance and untiring admiration by the Monday *feuille-*

*ton* writers, until the fair object of all their praises, however insensible she may have been to flattery, stood in imminent danger of having her youthful head most irretrievably turned. But her celebrity was based on too slight a foundation to last: ere long, people began to question the accuracy of their former judgment, and to doubt the hitherto universally acknowledged perfections of Jenny Vertpré's *protégée*. The press, too, gradually deserted her banner, and more than one strict and unsparing criticism appeared in the very journals where her supremacy had been hitherto the most absolute. As frequently happens in similar cases, from being over partial the public became unjustly severe; and thus, such was the general anxiety to strip their former favourite of her borrowed plumage, that those real qualities indisputably possessed by her were considered as dust in the balance, if indeed they were not altogether forgotten.

This reaction is beginning to subside, and M<sup>lle</sup> Désirée is now regarded, not as a second Mars or even Jenny Vertpré, but as a most agreeable and promising young actress, endowed with sufficient talent, beauty, and *gentillesse* to render her a valuable acquisition to any company. It is generally reported that she has recently accepted an engagement as *pensionnaire* at the Théâtre Français, and, for her own sake as well as for that of the public, we sincerely hope that the report may be correct.

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#### IRMA (M<sup>lle</sup>).

M<sup>lle</sup> Irma Aubry, after attaining a certain reputation at Bordeaux, appeared at the Palais Royal in July 1845, in *l'Ecole Buissonnière*. Quitting that theatre for the Gymnase, she made her *début* there November 12 in the same year, by succeeding M<sup>lle</sup> Désirée as *Marie Perrot* in *Noémie*. She is an exceedingly lively actress, with dark hair, expressive eyes, and a remarkably neat little figure. Her voice is naturally thin and rather sharp, but she manages it with skill and even taste, so much so as to render her singing of a *couplet* occasionally pleasing. M<sup>lle</sup> Irma



has given proof of talent in almost every one of her personations, but is especially at home as a *grüette* or a *débardeur*.

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KOEHLER (M<sup>lle</sup> JENNY).

First appeared at the Gymnase, January 15, 1846, as *Caroline* in *Un Nuage au Ciel*. She is short in stature, and there is a childish simplicity in her manner which is not altogether unattractive : a little more animation, however, would greatly improve her acting.

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LAMBQUIN (M<sup>lle</sup>).

Actresses in general are unwilling to play the old women until age compels them to do so. M<sup>lle</sup> Lambquin has been wise enough to deviate from the usual custom, and has had the courage while still young to devote her talent to a line of parts in which she has but few competitors, and with the exception of M<sup>lle</sup> Desmousseaux, Guillemain, and Flore, no superior. The success obtained by her first at the Ambigu, and subsequently at the Cirque Olympique, has been renewed at the Gymnase, where she is deservedly a favourite.

Our praises, however, must be understood to refer to her performance of the middle and lower classes of *duègnes*, her assumption of *la grande dame* being occasionally characterized by a degree of vulgarity from which her excellent predecessor, M<sup>lle</sup> Julienne, was wholly free. We feel bound to add, nevertheless, that M<sup>lle</sup> Lambquin's recent creation of *Mme Harlowe* in *Clarissa Harlowe* is a most decided improvement on any of her preceding efforts.

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LÉON (M<sup>lle</sup>).

A young and promising actress of the Déjazet school, who quitted the

Variétés in January, 1846, for the Gymnase, where she made a tolerably successful *début* as *Hélène* in *les Couleurs de Marguerite*.

M<sup>lle</sup> Léon strikingly resembles M<sup>lle</sup> Déjazet both in voice and manner.

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MARTHE (M<sup>lle</sup>).

M<sup>lle</sup> Marthe Letessier created some sensation at the Odéon in the winter of 1845 by her performance of *Lais* in *Diogène*. She is, however, far more in her element at the Gymnase, where she first appeared May 12, 1846, as *Adèle* in *la Pensionnaire Mariée*, especially as she has there an opportunity of displaying to advantage a very sweet and musical voice, admirably adapted to *couplet* singing.

M<sup>lle</sup> Marthe is one of the prettiest and most pleasing actresses in Paris : she has yet much to learn, and, as far as stage experience is concerned, is little more than a novice ; but there is such a charming youthful freshness in her countenance, and such a winning simplicity and *naïveté* in her manner, that, while admiring the delicate rose-bud before us, we are apt to forget our critical severity in our satisfaction at beholding so exquisite a specimen of female beauty (1).

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MELCY (M<sup>lle</sup>).

M<sup>lle</sup> Clotilde Amélie Ménier, *alias* Melcy, first became a member of the Gymnase in October, 1844, when she made an almost unnoticed *début* in *Estelle*. Since then, however, by constant study and perseverance, she has attained a degree of eminence for which her talents as an actress in our opinion hardly qualify her.

She is not altogether without animation, nor is she by any means deficient in intelligence, but her voice is *larmoyant* in the extreme, and there is a sameness in her acting and delivery which tends greatly to

(1) M<sup>lle</sup> Marthe looks and acts *Jenny* in *Clarisse Barton* to perfection.

neutralize the many agreeable qualities she possesses. Her personal appearance is very much in her favour: she has fine eyes, beautiful hair, and a good figure, and is moreover one of the best and most lady-like dressers on the French stage.

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#### MONVAL (M<sup>me</sup>).

M<sup>me</sup> Monval is the wife of the *régisseur*, and has created some comic parts with a certain degree of humour and originality.

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#### SAUVAGE (M<sup>lle</sup> EUGÉNIE).

Born August 13, 1813. In 1827, she first appeared at the Porte Saint Martin in *les Deux Frères*, and was subsequently engaged at the Gaité, where she remained until the destruction of that theatre by fire in 1835. We find her shortly after at the Gymnase, where her performance of *la Fille d'un Militaire* added greatly to her reputation, and was even pronounced equal to the happiest efforts of M<sup>lle</sup> Mars and Léontine Fay. Crossing the Boulevard to the Variétés, M<sup>lle</sup> Sauvage eventually left that theatre for the Odéon, and at last, in October, 1845, reappeared at the Gymnase as *la Comtesse* in *Noémie*. She is a quiet and lady-like actress; her manners are totally free from vulgarity, and she treads the stage with grace, ease, and dignity (1).

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#### VALLÉE (M<sup>lle</sup>).

M<sup>lle</sup> Céline Vallée, without being a first-rate actress, is an agreeable and graceful performer, and we regret that so few opportunities are allowed her of displaying her very pleasing talent.

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(1) As *Clotilde* in *Eire aimé ou mourir*, M<sup>lle</sup> Sauvage is seen to very great advantage.

Few theatres possess a better or more varied *répertoire* than the Gymnase, which has been enriched by the *chef-d'œuvre* of Scribe, Bayard, Mélesville, and indeed of most of the leading dramatists who have flourished during the last twenty years. From this admirable collection of pieces, we select a few of the most remarkable, ancient as well as modern :

Malvina.  
 Le Mariage de Raison.  
 La Demoiselle à Marier.  
 Philippe.  
 Yelva.  
 Les Fées de Paris,  
 Un Roman Intime.  
 Le Secrétaire et le Cuisinier.  
 Les Aides de Camp.  
 Le Diplomate.  
 M<sup>me</sup> de Cérigny.  
 Rebecca.  
 Un Tuteur de Vingt Ans.  
 Les Trois Péchés du Diable.  
 La Bolle et la Bête.  
 La Marraine.  
 Rodolphe.  
 La Pensionnaire Mariée.  
 L'Image.  
 Jeanne et Jeanneton.  
 La Somnambule.  
 La Seconde Année.  
 Un Changement de Main.  
 La Loi Salique.  
 La Vie en Partie Double.  
 Noémie.  
 Un Mari qui se dérange.  
 Geneviève.  
 Clarisse Harlowe.

## CHAPTER X.

### PALAIS ROYAL.

*Manager, M. Dormeuil.*

AFTER the expulsion of Brunet and his comrades from the Salle Montansier, that theatre became the scene of divers exhibitions, its first proprietor being Forioso, the celebrated rope-dancer. Two brothers of the name of Ravel having denied his supremacy in this saltatory art, a challenge was forthwith sent by them and accepted by their Italian rival, the Théâtre Montansier being fixed upon as the arena whereon the championship was to be decided. The contest terminated in the discomfiture of Forioso, who, after having been again overcome on a second trial, declared his intention, with the view of re-establishing his superiority, of walking on a rope stretched over the Seine from the Pont de la Concorde to the Palais Royal. - This extraordinary feat, however, the announcement of which had created a great sensation, never came off.

After the departure of Forioso and the brothers Ravel from Paris, M<sup>lle</sup> Montansier obtained permission to let her theatre for the performance of what were then called *les Jeux Forains*, or, in other words, for a puppet-show, the pieces consisting of little vaudevilles, and the actors

of wooden *fantoccini*. This novel entertainment was thus alluded to in a coupletsung at the Gaîté :

" Les jeux forains, je le vois,  
S'ouvrent sous d'heureux auspices,  
Tous les acteurs sont de bois,  
On n'y craint pas leurs malices;  
Et s'il prend quelques caprices  
Aux directeurs mécontents,  
Engagemens, acteurs, actrices,  
Tout ça s'en va en un clin de temps."

This exhibition was succeeded by another at once more original and more popular, the actors being a company of remarkably intelligent dogs, and the pieces performed by them melodramas of which the reader may form some idea from the following analysis of one of the best.

A young Russian princess, held captive in a castle by a tyrant, has a lover, who has sworn to effect her deliverance. On the rising of the curtain the fair prisoner (a pretty spaniel) is discovered walking on the parapet of a tower; the lover (a very handsome dog) presently appears at the foot of the wall barking very amorously. As for the tyrant, he is represented by a ferocious-looking bull-dog with a smashed nose. On a given signal the lover's army make their *entrée*, and scale the walls of the castle, which, after a gallant defence on the part of the garrison, is finally taken, and the princess delivered.

Several private individuals brought their dogs to serve as auxiliaries in this "skrimmage," so that it was no uncommon thing to hear the different proprietors shouting out in tones of encouragement during the piece: "*Bravo, Médor!*" "*Allez donc, Turc!*" cries to which the volunteers responded by sundry barks and wags of the tail. One evening, however, a dog was standing sentinel at the foot of the tower, when his master entered the theatre, and took his seat in the stalls: the poor animal instantly recognizing him deserted from his post with arms and accoutrements, and it was with difficulty that the others were prevented from following his example.

On the closing of this exhibition the theatre was converted into a *café*, where all dramatic performances were at first forbidden, but by degrees detached scenes and even vaudevilles were allowed, on condition of their being played by only two or at most three actors. This

*café-spectacle* became during the hundred days the favourite *rendez-vous* of Napoleon's partizans, and on the second restoration the *gardes-du-corps* of Louis XVIII. came thither, and in revenge broke the glasses and everything they could lay hands on. This disturbance caused the Café Montansier to be closed for a while, but it was afterwards re-opened by a certain Valin, under whose management short pieces were given, the number of actors being restricted to two.

In 1830, a privilege for the Salle du Palais Royal was granted by the minister, M. Montalivet, to Messrs. Dormeuil and Charles Poirson, and the theatre having been entirely rebuilt opened June 6, 1831, with a prologue entitled *Ils n'ouvriront pas*. Since then, notwithstanding the secession of Achard and M<sup>lle</sup> Déjazet from the company, the prosperity of the Palais Royal has undergone little interruption, thanks to the excellence of the *troupe* and to the tact and ability of its worthy manager, M. Dormeuil (1).

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## THE COMPANY.

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### BERGER.

A tolerable *amoureux*, once a member of M. Comte's juvenile theatre.

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### DERVAL.

Derval (whose real name is, we believe, Dobigny) deservedly ranks

(1) This theatre has lately lost another of its most agreeable *pensionnaires* in the person of M<sup>lle</sup> Augustine Duverger, one of the handsomest women in Paris, off on the stage. She possesses the finest pair of eyes we have ever had the good fortune to behold; it is impossible to imagine anything more exquisitely lustrous, brilliant, and expressive. Her figure, moreover, is deliciously symmetrical, and her toilette always fresh and becoming.

M<sup>lle</sup> Duverger's *début* at the Palais Royal took place in October, 1844, as *Florine* in the piece of that name; and she has since created several successful parts, especially in *L'Esquaveau*, *le Poussin d'Avril*, and *le Lait d'Anesse*.

among the best and most gentlemanly actors on the French stage. In 1828, he made a successful *début* at the Nouveautés, nor has his career at the Palais Royal been less brilliant. Naturally gifted with a tall and commanding figure, an intelligent and expressive countenance, and an agreeable voice, he possesses also an innate dignity and elegance of manner which enable him to wear the dress and assume the character of a marquis or chevalier of the *ancien régime* with such ease and grace as completely to identify himself with the personage he represents. This merit alone would (even were his other dramatic qualities less eminent than they really are) sufficiently justify the reputation enjoyed by Derval, there being no *rival* *avis* in Paris or elsewhere than an actor capable of exactly comprehending the difference that exists between a gentleman and a—*gent*.

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#### DORMEUIL.

It has been mentioned that on the opening of the Gymnase Dormeuil (whose family name is Contat-Desfontaines) was appointed *régisseur général* of that theatre. In 1831 he became manager and actor of the Palais Royal, but his appearances in the latter capacity are now few and far between, being mostly confined to one or two characters originally created by him. While still *régisseur* he married M<sup>lle</sup> Esther, an actress of considerable talent, who quitted the Vaudeville to join her husband first at the Gymnase, and subsequently at the Palais Royal, but who retired from the stage several years ago.

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#### GERMAIN.

Germain, like Derval, is tall and good-looking, but there the resemblance ceases. He has neither the easy elegance nor the dignity of manner possessed in so remarkable a degree by his excellent comrade ;



and this is the more to be regretted, inasmuch as, physically speaking, he is admirably qualified for an *amoureux* (1).

#### GRASSOT.

This very amusing actor, as has been well remarked, belies his name, being neither *grus* nor *sot*. On the contrary, he is both thin and witty, and moreover, incredible as it may appear to those who have only seen him on the stage of the Palais Royal, a well-informed and highly intelligent man.

His natural *p penchant* for acting being strengthened by the success obtained by him in some amateur performances, he joined one of the companies of the *baniene*, and came out—the fact is indisputable—as an *amoureux*. It is even said that the fair patronesses of the theatre to which he was attached agreed in pronouncing him to be remarkably good-looking; but we cannot vouch for the correctness of this assertion. It is, however, certain that he himself, after mature reflection, discovered that nature had intended him rather for a Momus than an Antinous, and consequently gave up without a sigh the well-cut coat, the *bottes vernies*, and the *gants paille* of the young lover for a succession of the most grotesque and whimsical costumes that human fancy ever invented. Leaving the *baniene* for Rheims, Grassot returned to Paris to succeed Legrand at the Gymnase; but being on indifferent terms with M. Poirson, the manager, he soon quitted that theatre for Rouen, where he first appeared in 1836. Two years later, in June, 1838, he was engaged by M. Dorneuil, and made a triumphant *début* at the Palais Royal, in *Monsieur de Croylin, ou l'Homme infiniment poli*.

Eight years have elapsed since that evening, and Grassot now ranks among the best low comedians of his day: fifty or sixty successful creations have proved the versatility as well as the originality of his talent, and have entitled him to take his place beside Lovassor, Ravel, Sainville, Alcide Tousez, and Leménil, completing such a half dozen of comic actors as no other theatre in Paris can muster. One of the chief

(1) Germain was once attached to the Bordeaux theatre.



causes of the immense vogue enjoyed by the Palais Royal is the perfect *ensemble* with which even the most trifling and insignificant vaudeville is played : the performers, male and female, appear quite at home with each other, and, far from endeavouring to render their own parts more effective at the expense of those of their comrades, seem to have but one object in view, viz., that of contributing, each according to the importance of his or her character, and without any wish to monopolize the applause of the public, to the general effect of the piece.

Moreover, there is a certain sympathy between the actors and audience of this theatre, which exists nowhere else : the mere entrance of one of the favourite *comiques* above-mentioned, and more especially of Grassot, is generally the signal for a roar of laughter, which in his case is mainly owing to his invariably eccentric manner. People go to the Palais Royal prepared to laugh, and they would be disappointed if their sides and faces did not ache before the first act was over ; nor does this hilarity at all depend on the merits of the piece, the mere circumstance of Grassot or Sainville being included in the cast sufficing to atone for any sins of commission or omission on the part of the author.

We frequently remember the entire house being thrown into convulsions by the mere *entrée* of Grassot, with that droll *aplomb* and irresistible gravity peculiar to himself, long before he has even opened his lips. The extraordinary cut of his coat, the pattern of his waistcoat, and above all his comical shakes of the head and the singular mixture of fidgetty nervousness and assurance which characterizes his walk and manner, must be seen in order to be appreciated ; no description can do them justice. But Grassot does not wholly depend on his tailor, or even on his own by-play, for the *succès de rire* nightly obtained by him : the tone of his voice is as droll, nay, droller than his silence, and so comic is his delivery that the dullest and most pointless passages uttered by him produce more effect than do the wittiest sallies in the mouth of any other actor. Among his best creations are *Cabassol* in *Paris, Orléans et Rouen*, *Tourterot* in *Deux Papes très-bien*, and *Coquillot* in *la Femme Electrique* ; and in these, as in all his other characters, he is unapproachable.

Grassot is the same original and comic creature off the stage as he

is on; but with all his natural propensity for fun he is, as we have already said, an extremely well-informed man, who can talk on almost every subject, however abstruse, with as much facility and power of reasoning as if that particular topic had been the study of his whole life. His amiable qualities have secured him the esteem of a large circle of friends, and we doubt whether any actor in Paris enjoys more general popularity, as well in as out of the theatre.

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## KALEKAIRE.

A very inanimate representative of old men, the chilling apathy of whose acting contrasts painfully with the gaiety of his comrades.

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## LACOURIÈRE.

This young *comique* has wonderfully improved since he quitted the Luxembourg for the Palais Royal. He is a lively mercurial actor, with no lack of gaiety or animation, and only requires confidence in his own powers to become a general favourite.

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## LEMÉNIL.

Born in Paris, in a street immortalized by one of the most amusing pieces in the *répertoire* of the Palais Royal, *la Rue de la Lune*. Placed by his parents in an artificial flower and feather shop, Leménil appears to have been bitten early in life with the dramatic mania, and to have occasionally gratified his Thespian longings by a little preparatory practice at Doyen's private theatre.

At the age of eighteen, he left Paris and engaged himself as chorist in the Nantes company, and it was there that M<sup>lle</sup> Georges, during one of her provincial tours, saw him, and, auguring favourably of his comic ta-



lent, advised him to try his fortune in the capital. Leménil did so, and we find him in 1827 engaged at the Galté as a substitute for Bouffé, who had just quitted that theatre. Our hero soon became a favourite with the *finis* of the Boulevard, whose good-will he especially gained by his clever acting in *la Peste de Marseille* and *Il y a Soixante Ans*. In 1834 he quitted the Galté for the Palais Royal, where, if he consults his own interest as well as that of the public, he will remain.

Leménil is a most versatile and useful performer, being able to play all kind of parts, and all in an equally creditable manner. He has given proof of an unusually flexible talent in *Paris Voleur*, in which piece he sustained no less than six characters, in every respect opposed to each other; his different disguises of dress, voice, and manner, being so admirably contrived as thoroughly to puzzle many experienced play-goers. His *Major Cravachon* (a sort of French Munchausen) is also a rich humorous treat, and his invariable sentence: "*Je suis le major Cravachon, j'ai brûlé l'Allemagne, détrôné des rois, mangé du cheval!*" is perfect in its way. He does not depend on grimaces for effect, but is droll without any apparent effort to be so. His voice, though by no means musical, is nevertheless, from his extreme distinctness, well adapted to vaudeville singing, while its delivery is so expressive that if there be a point in the *couplet* entrusted to him he is sure to make the most of it.

Leménil, like Grassot, is as popular in private life as he is on the stage. He was one of the original founders of the Dramatic Artists' Association, and has ever been one of the most indefatigable members of that excellent society (1).

(1) This association, of which Baron Taylor is the president, was definitively established in March, 1840, and is composed exclusively of persons in some way or other connected with the stage. Each member pays a monthly subscription of ten sous towards the funds of the society, out of which, independently of the relief afforded to performers in distress or ill-health, pensions are paid to several retired actors, many of whom are more than eighty years old.

One of the chief sources of profit to the treasury of the association is the annual ball held at the Opera Comique, for which as many as three thousand tickets are frequently sold. Few artists, moreover, while on congé, neglect to lay by a portion of their provincial gains for the benefit of their less fortunate brethren; and among those who have been the most liberal in their contributions since the foundation of the society we may mention Bouffé, Roger, Lévassor, Achard, M<sup>me</sup> Stoltz, Docher, Volnys, and M<sup>me</sup> Dejact.



## LEVASSOR.

Pierre Levassor was born early in 1808, at Fontainebleau. His father, an old soldier of the Imperial army, had a strong antipathy to anything connected with the stage, a feeling by no means shared by the future *comique* of the Palais Royal, whose chief amusement when a boy consisted in getting up *amateur* plays with his young companions, the price of admission to his theatre being a *pin*. The stage was formed of some planks laid on a couple of casks before the stable door, and the actors changed their dress in the stable, to which they descended by means of a ladder. The general wardrobe was composed of three or four aprons, and a *gendarme's* hat or two, which latter articles they contrived occasionally to borrow; as for the dialogue of their pieces, they said exactly what they liked, and consequently did not require a prompter.

One day, however, in the middle of the performances, Levassor's father surprised them unawares, and, being provided with a strong cudgel, thrashed both actors and audience to his heart's content, and shortly after sent his son, then aged twelve, to Paris, where he was apprenticed to a tradesman, receiving five *sous* a-week for pocket-money. This allowance procured him admission every Sunday to M<sup>re</sup> Saqui's theatre, of which he became a constant *habitué*. One evening, however, while he was waiting for the opening of the *bureau*, a smart shower of rain came on; and, looking round for shelter, he perceived a small door near him, through which several persons were rapidly passing. As soon as the coast was clear he darted in, and after feeling his way along a dark passage, at the end of which was a ladder, began to climb, and his head at last lifting a trap-door, he found himself behind the scenes. Fancy his rapture when, on returning home at night, he reflected that he had actually taken off his cap to three actresses and spoken to an actor. This incident more than ever confirmed him in his resolution to become a comedian, and at eighteen years of age he made his *début* in a private theatre belonging to the Duchesse d'Uzès in the Rue Saint Dominique, where performances were given once a-fortnight, and where he was admitted as a kind of supernumerary. His memory was not

severely taxed on this occasion, his duty being simply to announce a visitor as follows :

"Milady."

"Qu'est-ce que?"

"C'est un Monsieur qui dit qu'il se nomme Blifil."

Unimportant as the part was, Levassor felt so proud of his achievement that he quite forgot to eat, and coming home at night half starved without a *sou*, devoured with the greatest relish a bit of the rind of a Gruyère cheese, the interior of which had long since disappeared.

Previously to this *début*, he had been obliged to keep his occasional visits to the theatre secret from his master, who was little better disposed towards the stage and those connected with it than Levassor's own father. Our hero, in the ardour of his dramatic enthusiasm, had constructed for himself a miniature theatre, which unluckily falling into the hands of the *patron* was consigned to the flames. Passing one day along the Boulevard de la Madeleine, he beheld another, the elegant appearance of which so fascinated him that, after ascertaining the price (thirty-five francs), he resolved to lay by all his money until he had amassed a sufficient sum to purchase it. He had contrived to remit to the proprietor of his *bijou* no less than eighteen francs, when his master, chancing to discover his mode of employing his earnings, forbade any further visits to the Boulevard de la Madeleine, and poor Levassor not only lost his theatre, but his eighteen francs into the bargain.

On the breaking out of the revolution of 1830, Levassor was at Marseilles, whither he had been sent on some matter connected with his master's business. A dinner being given to celebrate the event, which was attended by all the *commis-royageurs* in the city, he sang at the general request the then highly popular song of *les Trois Couleurs* with such immense success, that on the whole party adjourning after dinner to the Grand Theatre, a note was thrown on the stage in which he volunteered to sing it in public, if agreeable to the audience. The offer was accepted, and both song and vocalist were loudly applauded. Singularly enough, on the following evening he sang the same song at a minor theatre in Marseilles, and was hissed.

Returning to Paris, Levassor applied to M. Bossange, then manager of the Nouveautés, for leave to make a *début* at his theatre. The

requisite permission being granted, he appeared in *le Charpentier*, a part originally created by Bouffé, and was told to study a piece called *Quoniam* for his second *début*. He had already learnt the first act when he was told one evening that the piece was announced for performance on the following night. "But," said he, "I only know one act." "Never mind, learn the other in bed." However, when the next day came, he was wretchedly imperfect, and as the eventful moment approached, became horribly nervous. He got through the first act very tolerably, but stuck fast before he had said many sentences of the second. The audience began to hiss, and Levassor, who had been endeavouring for the last ten minutes to invent some species of dialogue which he thought might pass muster, exerted himself so much to supply the want of words with gestures that his wig, which had not been properly fastened on his head, fell off amid a general roar of delight from the whole house.

To pick up the slippery peruke and replace it was the work of a moment, but unluckily he could not, with all his ingenuity, contrive to prevent his own light hair from peeping out on either side of the old man's powdered wig, the absurd effect of which was increased by an enormous pigtail hanging over the collar of his coat. This little *contre-temps* did not, as may be supposed, help Levassor to recover his memory, and his *rôle* was finished partly by himself and partly by the other actors, over whose voices that of the prompter necessarily predominated until the fall of the curtain.

On the closing of the Nouveautés our hero, having no other engagement in view, returned to his business, but soon after, thanks to the kind offices of M<sup>lle</sup> Déjazet, was admitted as a member of the Palais Royal, and made a brilliant *début* in *la Ferme de Bondy*. In 1840 he appeared at the Variétés in *la Meunière de Marly*, and after three years' stay at that theatre returned in 1843 to the Palais Royal. There he has created, as well before his departure as subsequently to his *rentrée*, a number of successful parts, among others in *les Trois Dimanches*, *Brelan de Troupiers*, and *le Lait d'Anesse*, in each of which, and specially in the second piece, he has given the most surprising proofs of the versatility and originality of his talent. He is one of the very few actors who can disguise not only their outward appearance, but also

their voice, walk, and manner so admirably as almost to defy recognition; no one better than him understands the mechanical business of making up a costume, nor can any one invest his personations with more life-like reality.

Levassor is the best *chansonnette* singer in France: his voice is remarkable both for extent and flexibility, and his articulation is so distinct that, even while apparently speaking in a whisper, not a word he utters ever escapes the audience. Those of his vocal efforts which have pleased us most are *le Chanteur Choriste*, *la Mère Michel aux Italiens*, and *le Renard et le Corbeau*; but all his songs are so good that it is difficult to give the preference to any. His imitative powers are great; he can mimic every kind of animal and indeed almost every possible sound with singular fidelity: he is also a light and active dancer, and was one of the first to introduce the Polka (which he executed *en femme*) on the stage. In fact, whether the part assumed by him be serious or gay, tragic (witness his admirable tragedy burlesque in *le Troubadour Omnibus*) or comic, sentimental or farcical, his performance is sure to be equally good and equally natural. Of how many actors in Paris or elsewhere can we say as much?

#### LHÉRITIER.

We have seen Lhéritier in most of his creations, but never to such advantage as in *Brelan de Troupiers*, in which piece, if we recollect aright, he played the part of a butcher. He both looked and acted the character so admirably, had such a red face, and talked about his *abattoirs* with such evident *gusto*, that we really for a time imagined ourselves enjoying a *tête-à-tête* with M. Rolland, the worthy annual purchaser of the *Bœuf Gras*.

Our next visit, however, to the Palais Royal disappointed us sadly: the name of Lhéritier was in the bills, but we looked in vain for our jolly butcher. The red face was gone, the rough hearty voice was tuned down to a smooth whisper, and the jovial bearing of our rosy-cheeked friend was transformed into the by no means picturesque gait of an



elderly gentleman, who was perpetually scolding his ward for thinking of marrying, and who never even alluded to his once favourite topic, the *abattoirs*.

It is not often that we quote Shakspeare, but that night, as we came out of the theatre, we certainly did catch ourselves muttering with a very crest-fallen air,

"Othello's occupation's gone!"

It would be unjust, however, not to add that Lhéritier is a most pains-taking actor, and a valuable and useful addition to the company.

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#### LUGUET.

A lively bustling performer, about thirty years of age, who left the Gymnase for the Palais Royal a year or two ago, and made a successful *début* at the latter theatre in *le Vieux de la Vieille*.

He is equally good in light comedy and broad farce, and a piece must be stupid indeed to hang heavy while he is on the stage, so spirited and full of animation is his acting.

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#### MEYNADIER.

Plays the walking gentlemen (the most difficult of all characters to act *well*) very creditably.

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#### RAVEL.

This most amusing and popular *comique* is a native of Bordeaux, where his attempts when young to act *en amateur* displeased his father, a horse-dealer in that city, who, with a view to prevent all such vagaries for the future, placed him in a notary's office. Ravel, however,

gave his new master the slip, and, accompanied by eight or ten young associates, all as dramatically inclined as himself, went from town to village and from village to town in search of an engagement, living on little or nothing, until they came to Château Thierry. There they found a theatre, indifferent enough, it is true, but more welcome to them, nevertheless, than a palace would have been, and moreover a violin, a fife, and a clarinet for orchestra. From that moment Ravel was an actor.

During his provincial career he once played *Pasquin* in *les Jeux de l'Amour et du Hasard* to M<sup>lle</sup> Mars's *Silvia*, and acquitted himself of the task extremely well. Coming to Paris soon after, he made a most successful *début* at the Vaudeville, then in the Rue de Chartres, as *le Tourtourou*, and remained constant to that theatre during its trans-migrations, first to the Boulevard Bonne Nouvelle, and subsequently to the Place de la Bourse, but eventually quitted it together with his wife (1) for the Palais Royal.

There he has long since made himself quite at home, more so, in fact, than he ever was at the Vaudeville, where it is difficult for a comic actor to succeed by the side of Arnal. *L'Omelette Fantastique*, *le Caporal et la Payse*, *la Rue de la Lune*, and more recently *l'Inventeur de la Poudre*, and *l'Etourneau* (2), rank, thanks to him, among the most attractive pieces of the *répertoire*; the latter vaudeville, especially, having enjoyed a more brilliant and prosperous career than any novelty produced for several years at this theatre.

Ravel is short and slight in figure; he has a peculiar elasticity of step, and a droll fidgetty manner of treading the stage, the ludicrous effect of which is heightened by his comical self-sufficient air, and by the no less comical intonation of his voice. His eye is marvellously expressive and never idle, and he accompanies every joke and repartee with a knowing smirk *à la* Buckstone, which makes his audience roar with laughter, they can hardly tell why. He is one of the few actors of the Palais Royal who by his own individual exertions can carry a piece through; witness *Ravel en Voyage* and *Frère Galfaire*, both most

(1) Now retired from the stage.

(2) Adaptations of *L'Omelette Fantastique* and *l'Etourneau* have been played in London under the respective titles of the *Phantom Breakfast*, and the *Irish Post*.

wretched productions, which owe the popularity they still enjoy to his talent alone.

Ravel played for a short time in London during the season of 1845 with very decided success.

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#### ROUSSET.

One of M. Dormeuil's newest recruits, his first appearance at the Palais Royal having taken place in June, 1846, in *le Philtre Champenois*. As far as we can judge from his performance of the very trifling parts hitherto confided to him, he appears likely to become a serviceable actor.

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#### SAINVILLE.

The real name of this most entertaining actor and amiable man is Morel, and his first dramatic *début* dates as far back as the year 1824, when he appeared on the boards of a private theatre kept for the especial use of stage-struck apprentices and *grisettes* by an upholsterer of the name of Caron, in the Rue Saint-Antoine, as *Jérôme* in *Prévillo et Tacconnet*. Unluckily the success he obtained came to the ears of his master, a worthy tradesman, who, not contented with severely reprimanding our hero, dismissed him from his employ.

Sainville's parents, imagining that a temporary absence from Paris would probably cure their son of his fondness for the drama, sent him to Bordeaux, where, thanks to a letter of recommendation he carried with him, he found himself installed soon after his arrival as apprentice to a broker, receiving no salary, and having moreover to find himself in board and lodging. Such a position was not attractive, and his only consolation was the theatre, where, as long as his money lasted, he regularly passed his evenings. During his stay in Bordeaux, the epoch fixed for the annual *débuts* arrived, and several of the rejected candidates having resolved to try their luck in the environs on their own

account, Sainville offered his services, and was accepted as *amoureux*. He accompanied the newly formed *troupe* first to Langon, where he played the lovers both in *opéra comique* and vaudeville, and from thence to Bazas, where he remained six months. The theatre was empty every night, and the landlord of the inn where the unlucky strollers lodged refused to give them credit, and even seized on their clothes in part payment of his bill. Sainville, however, was fortunate enough to obtain an engagement at Libourne, where he was somewhat better off, and had leisure to study comic parts.

In 1827 he came to Paris, and soon after made a successful *début* at the theatre of *Mont-Parnasse*, where he remained some time; among his comrades there being Félix, now of the Vaudeville, and Alcide Tousez.

In 1831, he was engaged at the Palais Royal, and is now the only remaining actor in the company of all those who played at that theatre on the opening night. Sainville is as indispensable to the Palais Royal as the Palais Royal is indispensable to him: nowhere else would his round jolly face and portly figure be seen to equal advantage. Perhaps of all the actors in this theatre, he is the one of most general utility and value; his indefatigable zeal and excellent memory are qualities as precious to the management as are his inexhaustible spirits and jovial gaiety to the public. Possessor of a most comic and flexible physiognomy, he can assume every variety of expression with equal facility; at one time he will look the very incarnation of stupidity, putting on the dullest and most unmeaning stare and the silliest smile imaginable; at another he will skip about with elephantine playfulness, reminding one, though at a respectable distance, of Lablache in *Il Matrimonio Segreto*. When he makes his *entrée*, the audience as a matter of course prepare to laugh, and long before he has advanced to the front of the stage the whole house is usually in a roar. There is something so indefinitely ridiculous in his look, voice, and manner, that it is impossible for the most *blase* play-goer to resist at least a smile: as for ourselves, we candidly confess that we never return from the Palais Royal without feeling our jaws and sides in a perfect state of martyrdom, for which we are principally indebted to our old acquaintance Sainville.

Among the hundred and one pieces enlivened by this droll actor we

may cite particularly *le Vicomte de Létorière*, *la Rue de la Lune*, *l'Almanach des 25,000 Adresses*, *les Bains à Domicile*, *l'Inventeur de la Poudre*, and *le Bonhomme Richard*.

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TOLSEZ (ALCIDE).

After a prosperous career in the *Banlieue*, Alcide Tousez, brother of Léonard Tousez, formerly of the *Variétés*, first appeared at the Palais Royal April 6, 1833, in *le Valet de Ferme*, and in the eight years subsequent to his *début* at that theatre created no less than eighty-six parts. His *répertoire* consists of a strange collection of the most grotesque caricatures, the originality of which is as unquestionable as their drollery, and he may boast of having personated every possible variety of the *genus* simpleton, from the victimized dupe to the blundering *Jocrisse*. Though all his characters necessarily bear a strong family likeness to each other, his acting is by no means monotonous, nor does he copy himself, much less any one else. We have seldom seen him to greater advantage than in *Paris Voleur*, in which piece he acts the part of a provincial newly arrived in Paris, with an immense idea of his own acuteness, which the impositions continually practised on him, far from diminishing, only tend to augment. The effect produced by his blond curls, extraordinary nose, and indescribably conceited air, is irresistible, and is materially heightened by his lisping volubility of utterance, the extreme indistinctness of which renders it absolutely impossible to catch more than half of what he says.

Alcide Tousez is less natural than Vernet, and less refined than Arnal; but in his own peculiar line of parts, where the most sublimely ridiculous *bêtises* usurp the place of wit and satire, he is without a rival (1).

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(1) We would recommend any of our readers who love broad farce by no means to miss seeing Alcide Tousez in *le Roi des Fraguins*.

BERGER (M<sup>me</sup>).

M<sup>me</sup> Berger has fine black eyes and hair, and is altogether a showy woman.

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DUPUIS (M<sup>me</sup>).

M<sup>lle</sup> Charlotte Bordes commenced her dramatic career at the Funambules, and was subsequently engaged at the Porte Saint Martin. Several years ago she made, as M<sup>me</sup> Dupuis, a successful *début* at the Palais Royal, and has since ranked among the most useful female members of the company. Without being either handsome or pretty, her countenance is *piquant*, and she is, on the whole, a very fair second-rate substitute for Déjazet.

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DURAND (M<sup>lle</sup>).

M<sup>lle</sup> Lucile Durand is quite as pretty, quite as *gentille*, and a far better actress than her namesake at the Vaudeville.

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DUVAL (M<sup>lle</sup>).

This young lady, who is sometimes called in the bills M<sup>lle</sup> Aline Duval, and sometimes simply M<sup>lle</sup> Aline, originally came out, we believe, at M. Comte's juvenile theatre, and was afterwards engaged at the Panthéon. She now plays *grisettes* and *travestis* characters at the Palais Royal; and, provided that she has little or nothing to sing, gets through her part in a very off-hand easy manner.

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FRÉNEIX (M<sup>lle</sup>).

The dramatic career of M<sup>lle</sup> Fréneix may be thus briefly summed up : Théâtre Beaumarchais—Délassements Comiques—Galté—Palais Royal. At the first of these theatres she created no particular sensation ; the second she soon quitted for the third, where she was entrusted with important parts in *les Sept Châteaux du Diable* and *les Compagnons*, and at the fourth she made a moderately successful *début* April 28, 1846, as *Frilette* in the piece of that name.

M<sup>lle</sup> Fréneix has an intelligent but not exactly a pretty face ; her hair is of that peculiar colour which the French call *caendré*, and her eyes are of a soft and delicate blue. As an actress she promises well, possessing a melodious voice, a good delivery, and a quiet elegance of manner which contrasts advantageously with the *laissez aller* adopted (in humble imitation of Déjazet) by the majority of her comrades.

GRASSOT (M<sup>me</sup>).

Plays elderly young ladies very tolerably.

JULIETTE (M<sup>lle</sup>).

M<sup>lle</sup> Juliette is a lively and *piquante* little actress, who plays *grisettes* with great spirit and vivacity.

LAMBERT (M<sup>me</sup> Louise).

One of the acknowledged beauties of this theatre, her principal claims to such distinction being a pair of magnificent black eyes, a sweet smile, and a splendid figure. We know no one better qualified to set off a handsome costume.

LEMÉNIL (M<sup>me</sup>).

Daughter of Gougibus, formerly celebrated as an actor of pantomime at the Théâtre de la Cité. When only six years old, she played *la Petite Nickon* at the Porte Saint Martin with such archness and gaiety that she was frequently sent for at the conclusion of the piece by the occupants of the different boxes, and rewarded with a plentiful supply of cakes and *boubons*. After a provincial tour she went to the Vaudeville, then in the Rue de Chartres, being also engaged to play children's parts (when wanted) at the Théâtre Français, and it often happened that she had to perform at both theatres on the same evening.

M<sup>me</sup> Gougibus, however, soon arrived at that awkward age between childhood and womanhood, which made her position on the stage difficult and almost untenable. The Vaudeville would indeed have kept her, but at a very low salary: the Galté offered her double, and she came out on the Boulevard du Temple in *les Époux de Quinze Ans*, without, however, having attained that age. While still at the Galté she married Leménil, and accompanied him to the Palais Royal, where she deservedly ranks among the best actresses in the company. Among her most successful creations have been *M<sup>me</sup> Patin* in *les Premières Armes de Richelieu*, and *Arthémise* in *le Caporal et la Payse*.

M<sup>me</sup> Leménil's acting is remarkable for its piquancy; however slight be the part entrusted to her, it invariably becomes in her hands one of the leading features of the piece. No actress on the stage can *lancer le mot* (we have no equivalent expression in English) with more assurance and effect, nor can any one (Déjazet excepted) gloss over a questionable word or passage with greater dexterity.

MARTIN (M<sup>me</sup>).

A recent addition to the company, and by no means a disagreeable one.



MOUTIN (M<sup>me</sup>).

The *duigne* of the Palais Royal.

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NATHALIE (M<sup>lle</sup>).

M<sup>lle</sup> Nathalie Martel is one of the best and most pleasing actresses in Paris, and *the* best beyond all comparison at the theatre which now has the good fortune to possess her. She is, we believe, a native of Tournan, a village of *la Brie*, and is said to have commenced her dramatic career in Paris at the Théâtre de la Porte Saint Antoine (now the Beaumarchais). In June, 1837, she appeared, aged then about eighteen, at the Folies Dramatiques, where her success in *la Fille de l'Air* was so prodigious as to procure her almost immediately after an engagement at the Gymnase. There she made a most brilliant *début* February 22, 1838, in *l'Ange au Sixième Étage*, and up to the time of her quitting the theatre (January 13, 1845) was one of its chief attractions. Among the pieces mainly and in many cases solely indebted to her for their success, we may mention *la Gitana*, *Lucrèce à Poitiers*, *Jean Lenoir*, *le Cadet de Famille*, and *les Jolies Filles de Stiberg*, in which last-named vaudeville her performance of a dashing officer was much applauded.

Her first appearance at the Palais-Royal took place June 16, 1845, as *Dorothée* in *la Pêche aux Beaux-Pères*, and she has since distinguished herself by her charming acting in *Marie Michon*, *Mademoiselle ma Femme*, *les Pommes de Terre Malades*, *le Code des Femmes*, and *la Fille de Figaro*.

M<sup>lle</sup> Nathalie appears taller than she really is, owing to her excellent carriage and *port de reine*, and her figure, though inclining to *embou-point*, is neither deficient in elegance nor in grace. Her large black eyes are admirably lustrous, her voice is both sweet and powerful, and the prevailing expression of her countenance is extreme amiability and good humour.

Her talent is so varied that a character out of which she can make



Long & Pears & Co

*Portrait*



nothing must be poor indeed. In drama and in vaudeville she is equally well placed; her pathos being as remote from rant as her comedy is from vulgarity. She sings with remarkable taste, dances excellently, and dresses to perfection; her gaiety, moreover, is so natural and so inexhaustible, and she enters so thoroughly into the spirit of every part she assumes, as to take away all appearance of art or effort from her acting. M<sup>lle</sup> Nathalie possesses more friends and fewer rivals among her female contemporaries than perhaps any other actress in Paris, and this distinction she owes not to her superior talent, that being generally a mark for envy and jealousy, but to her amiable and generous disposition and true kindness of heart, qualities which have earned her the appellation of *bonne fille*, and have rendered her even more popular in private life than she is on the stage (1).

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#### SRIWANECK (M<sup>lle</sup>).

Since M<sup>lle</sup> Déjazet's departure from the Palais-Royal, some of her favourite creations, and among others *Vert-Vert* and *Indiana*, have been entrusted to this young actress, who, though not destitute of talent, is by no means equal to the task of replacing the inimitable *Frédillon*.

M<sup>lle</sup> Sriwaneck, whose chief defect consists in a rather sharp and wiry voice, is much more at home in pieces written expressly for herself, such as *le Roman de la Pension*, which most agreeable little comedy (first performed not long after her *début* in 1844) is played by her in a very charming and graceful manner.

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The list of the stock pieces of this theatre is very long: we give a selection of them, including a portion of the ancient *répertoire* of M<sup>lle</sup> Déjazet. We have intentionally omitted *les Premières Armes de Riche-*

(1) M<sup>lle</sup> Nathalie has recently, in a most unworthy parody of *Clarisse Harlowe*, given a new proof of the versatility of her talent. Her imitation of M<sup>lle</sup> Rose Chéri in this piece is surprisingly exact, and almost atones for the total absence of wit and even humour in *la Nouvelle Clarisse Harlowe*.

*lieu*, that comedy having been purchased together with *la Marquise de Carabas* by M. Roqueplan.

Le Vicomte de Létorière.  
 Brehan de Troupiers.  
 Un Scandale.  
 Vert-Vert.  
 Frétillon.  
 La Fille de Figaro.  
 La Fille de Dominique.  
 La Marquise de Prétintaille.  
 La Sœur de Jocrisse.  
 Paris, Orléans et Rouen.  
 Le Major Cravachon.  
 Un Bas Bleu.  
 Les Trois Dimanches.  
 L'Omelette Fantastique.  
 Sophie Arnould.  
 M<sup>lle</sup> Dangeville.  
 Bruno le Filleur.  
 Indiana et Charlemagne.  
 La Rue de la Lune.  
 Sous Clé.  
 M<sup>me</sup> Camus et sa Demoiselle.  
 L'Étourneau.  
 Florina.  
 Deux Papas très bien.  
 Le Roman de la Pension.  
 Un Poisson d'Avril.  
 La Pêche aux Beaux-Pères.  
 Les Bains à Domicile.  
 Le Lait d'Anesse.  
 La Femme Électrique.  
 L'Inventeur de la Poudre.  
 La Garde-Malade.  
 Le Bonhomme Richard.

## CHAPTER XI.

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### PORTE SAINT MARTIN.

BOULEVARD SAINT MARTIN.

*Manager, M. Théodore Cogniard.*

AFTER the destruction by fire of the Opera house in the Palais Royal in 1781, this theatre, as has been already mentioned, was rapidly erected as a temporary place of refuge for the company. On their departure it was closed, and re-opened in 1802 under the name of *Théâtre des Jeux Gymniques*, dramas, comedies, and ballets being performed there. Five years after, in 1807, it was again closed, together with several of the minor theatres, by order of Napoleon, and did not re-open until 1814. Previously, however, to the publication of the imperial edict, a piece called *le Passage du Mont Saint Bernard* was produced with immense success, Napoleon himself being personated by an actor named Chevalier. This coming to the ears of *le Petit Caporal*, he felt curious to see his dramatic representative, and, taking with him Duroc and two *aides de camp*, went one evening to the theatre *incognito*. Unluckily, the house was full, and Duroc, who was always the spokesman on such occasions, could get nothing but a small *loge grillée*, in one corner of which some pots of paint had been left by the

workmen then employed in decorating the interior of the building, and forgotten. Napoleon, struck with Chevalier's manner and dress, jumped up hastily from his seat in the middle of the performance, and overturning one of the pots, his legs and boots were covered with paint. This unfortunate incident irritated him to such a degree that he left the house abruptly, and on the following day sent an order to the manager to stop the representations of the *Passage du Mont Saint Bernard*.

On the re-opening of the Porte Saint Martin in 1814, one of the first novelties given was *la Pie Voleuse*, the original of *la Gazza Ladra* (1). In this celebrated drama Jenny Vertpré created a sensation equal to that produced in our own day by M<sup>lle</sup> Clarisse in *la Grâce de Dieu*. Other members of the company were Philippe, whose performance of *le Vampire* was the terror of the fair sex; Pierson, clever alike as actor and dancer; Moëssard, Pascal, and Emile Cottenet. This last-named performer was remarkable both for his lively and spirited acting, and for his gay and light-hearted character. He and Pascal (both *bons rieurs*) were daily frequenters of a sort of subterranean tavern near the Porte Saint Martin, which they had christened the *Catacombs*. As, however, they did not wish their comrades to know whither they went, they arranged their *rendez-vous* in the following mysterious manner. When Pascal felt thirsty, which he almost always did, he said to Emile Cottenet, in the gravest possible tone :

"Would M. Emile like to put on a clean shirt?"

(This meant : Will you come and have a glass of wine?)

"With great pleasure," replied Emile.

When he wished to drink *more* than a glass, Pascal would say :

"If M. Emile likes, he can have a frilled shirt."

The *frilled* shirt always had the preference, and away they went to the *Catacombs*.

Ballets were then produced at the Porte Saint Martin, in which M<sup>lle</sup> Be-grand and Louise Pierson displayed such beauty and such talent as to attract all Paris. Then came Mazurier, the admirable comic dancer, in

(1) The manager of the Italian Opera in Paris was condemned not long ago to pay the authors of *la Pie Voleuse* the sum of twenty francs for every representation which had been given in that Theatre of *la Gazza Ladra*, as being an imitation of their piece.

*Joeko* and *la Veige*, and later still, his clever successors, Laurencin and Ratel. Nor must we forget, among the chief ornaments of the *troupe* at this period, the inimitable Potier, some of whose best creations, including the *Père Sourniois* in *les Petites Danaïdes*, in which piece he was ably seconded by the charming Jenny Vertpré as *l'Amour*, date from the period of his engagement at this theatre.

M. de Romainville, under whose direction the Porte Saint Martin had opened in 1814, gave up his post in 1817 to M. Lefeuve, who was successively replaced by M. de Serres, the Baron de Montgenet, and M. Crosnier. The latter, on his becoming in 1830 manager of the Opéra Comique, was succeeded by M. Harel. This witty and clever man was born in 1790 (1), and has been by turns editor of a newspaper, *préfet* (during the hundred days), Chevalier of the Legion of Honour, banished at the restoration, then manager of the Odéon, officer in the national guard, and manager of the Porte Saint Martin.

More anecdotes have been fathered on him than on perhaps any of his contemporaries, even the famous saying of Talleyrand, "Speech was given to man to enable him to disguise his thoughts," being attributed to Harel. During the ten years which elapsed from the commencement to the close of his managerial career, in spite of the production of some of the best dramas of the *répertoire*, including *Antony*, *la Tour de Nesle*, and *Lucrèce Borgia*, and notwithstanding the engagement of M<sup>lle</sup> Georges, M<sup>me</sup> Dorval, Frédéric Lemaitre, and Bocage, he was constantly beset by difficulties of every kind, all of which he met with the most perfect gaiety and good humour.

Not only were his creditors unpaid, but his actors also; hardly a day elapsed without his inventive powers being called into play to answer some fresh claim on his purse. Once Raucourt, to whom long arrears were owing, came to him with a very serious face. "My good friend," said he, "I have not dined to day." "My dear fellow," replied Harel, "you will sup all the better." "But, in order to do that, I must have money." "What! have you none?" "No." "It is your own fault; go to the treasury. I have given directions that you should be paid."

Away went Raucourt to the treasurer, and handed in his account, the

1. M. Harel died in August, 1846.



sum total of which amounted to 550 francs. The treasurer gravely counted out 20 francs, and offered them to him, saying, he was unable to give him a *sou* more. Raucourt in a rage rushed back in hopes of finding Harel, but did not meet him until the following day. "M. Harel," said he, "you have been making a fool of me: according to your directions I went to the treasurer——" "Well, he ought to have paid you." "He offered me twenty francs!" "And you didn't take them?" "Certainly not." "You were wrong, my good friend, very wrong. I can't offer you so much to-day."

Harel, whatever requests might be made to him, was never at a loss for an answer. One day, a *figurant* in his company of the name of Fonbonne came to him, and asked him for an increase of salary. The manager, who perfectly knew the man he had to deal with, replied in the gravest possible tone: "M. Fonbonne, looking at the current receipts, I find it impossible to augment your salary; but *lucré* is not the only passion of an *artiste*. Though unable to satisfy you in a pecuniary point of view, I will at least gratify your pride. You are at present a *figurant*, from this day you shall be an actor: you have been hitherto confined to the second green room, from this day you shall have admittance into the first. Go, and without fear call M. Frédéric Lemaitre comrade; speak familiarly to M<sup>lle</sup> Theodorine (1): I authorize you to do so. I hope, M. Foubonne, that you will appreciate what I am doing for you."

Away went Fonbonne, whose *amour propre* was wonderfully flattered by his increased dignity; but he soon found that all was not *couleur de rose* in his new position, for whereas the *figurants* received their salary on the first of every month, the *actors* were not paid till the fifth or seventh, so that he was forced to live on credit for a week.

Such was Harel's persuasive eloquence that he is said to have even won the heart of a bailiff who was taking him to Clichy, and to have prevailed on him not only to suffer him to escape, but also to lend him a sum of money wherewith to carry on his management.

At last, after a long and persevering struggle, he was compelled to resign his post, and in hopes of bettering his fortune made a professional

(1) Now M<sup>me</sup> Mélingue, of the Théâtre Français.



tour through Russia, and, we believe, Turkey, with M<sup>lle</sup> Georges and some others members of the *troupe*, from which he returned penniless. During their excursions M<sup>lle</sup> Georges used frequently to play in the provinces, and on one occasion at Dreux the bills announced the appearance of the great tragic actress in *Sémiramis*, the following words (probably added by Harel) being printed in italics at the bottom of the *affiche*: "M<sup>lle</sup> Georges will appear in diamonds worth 30,000 francs. N. B. M<sup>lle</sup> Georges wears nothing false!"

After the resignation of M. Harel the Porte Saint Martin was closed, and re-opened in 1840, under the management of Messrs. Théodore and Hippolyte Cogniard (1), the former of whom is now sole director, M. Hippolyte Cogniard having recently succeeded M. Ancelot as manager of the Vaudeville.

Among the principal novelties produced at this theatre since the accession of the Messrs. Cogniard we may cite *Don César de Bazan*, and *la Dame de Saint Tropez*, two excellent additions to Frédéric Le-maitre's *répertoire*, *Marie Jeanne*, the greatest triumph of M<sup>me</sup> Dorval (2), the amusing *revue* of *Aujourd'hui et dans Cent Ans*, and that most magnificent of all fairy spectacles, *la Biche au Bois*. The prosperity of the Porte Saint Martin, which has been gradually on the increase since 1840, may fairly be attributed in a great measure to the liberal and spirited conduct of the brother managers, who have shown that the best way to command success is to deserve it. The company is now as complete as that of most Parisian theatres, and comprises perhaps more sterling talent than any single establishment (with very few exceptions) can boast. A void has, indeed, been left in the *troupe* by the departure of the pretty M<sup>lle</sup> Andréa (3), but we doubt not that

(1) Formerly joint managers with M. Mourier, of the Folies Dramatiques.

(2) M<sup>me</sup> Marie Dorval was born, we believe, in 1792, and made her first *début* on any stage at Bayonne. Commencing her Parisian career at the Porte Saint Martin, she was afterwards engaged at the Français, where she created *King Bell* in *Chatterton*. In 1844 she was at the Odéon, and from thence in January, 1845, returned to the Porte Saint Martin, which theatre, however, she again quitted at the close of the same year.

M<sup>me</sup> Dorval is the first dramatic actress of her day: she has more physical energy and passion than any of her contemporaries, and can sustain the most trying and arduous character (*Marie Jeanne* for instance) with little or no fatigue to herself. The effect of her acting on the female portion of her audience is difficult to be imagined: her pathos is so real, her despair so natural, that it is almost impossible to withstand their influence, or to maintain any degree of composure while under the spell of her wonderful talent.

(3) M<sup>lle</sup> Andréa d'Hargerville, who was engaged in London during most of the season of

M. Théodore Cogniard is already on the look out for some new beauty to fill it up.

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## THE COMPANY.

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### BERTHIER.

A very clever comic dancer, excellent as *le Grand Cousin* in the ballet of *le Déserteur*.

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### CLARENCE.

Paris can boast few *jeunes premiers* equal to Clarence, whether as regards personal appearance or talent. After studying for a year at the Conservatoire under the name of Charlait, he made a successful *début* at Montmartre, and was subsequently engaged at the Porte Saint Martin. Among his best creations there have been *Rochevane* in *Mathilde*, *Rodolphe* in *les Mystères de Paris*, and *Charles Darbel* in *la Dame de Saint Tropez*; and he has also, on the occasion of a benefit, played *Chatterton* in Count Alfred de Vigny's beautiful drama with such touching melancholy and deep feeling as to obtain a most decided *succès de larmes*.

Clarence possesses, in addition to a very intelligent and pleasing countenance, an elegant figure, and a voice at once melodious and powerful: he has, indeed, every requisite for the line of parts assumed

1848, is daughter of a nobleman, formerly attached to the person of Charles X. The revolution of 1830, which deprived her family of almost every means of subsistence, induced her to turn her thoughts to the stage, and in November, 1840, she appeared at the Porte Saint Martin as *Jenny* in *Richard d'Arlequin* with great success. Among her subsequent creations were *Stella* in *Paris le Bohémien*, *Amazil* in *les Mille et Une Nuits* and *Lazarille* in *Don César de Bazan*.

M<sup>lle</sup> Andrée is not only a handsome woman, but a very pleasing actress, and as such is still regretted by the hobnobs of the Porte Saint Martin.



by him, and much do we regret that such talents as his should be wasted on a *Boulevard* audience, when they might be so advantageously employed and so well appreciated at the Théâtre Français.

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DUBOIS.

A somewhat heavy but occasionally amusing comic actor, who was very droll as King *Dretindindin* in *la Biche au Bois*.

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GABRIEL.

Whoever has seen the famous *Revue* entitled *Aujourd'hui et dans Cent Ans* must remember the scene between King Richard and the tenor, so admirably sung by Gabriel. The voice of this clever *artiste* is rich in tone and by no means deficient in sweetness; and were not opera less the order of the day than burlesque at the Porte Saint Martin, he might aspire to no small reputation as a vocalist. At it is, he is an excellent comic singer and an equally good comic actor.

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GRAILLY (EUGÈNE).

Never having had the good fortune to fall in with a real King of Spain, and entertaining, moreover, but very vague ideas as to what such a potentate may be like, we do not feel competent to decide whether or not M. Eugène Grailly's personations of Castilian and Arragonese monarchs (almost the only parts we have seen him play) are correct. Viewed in the light of dramatic conceptions, they are remarkably clever and artistical, and would do honour to any actor. In *Don César de Bazan*, especially, Grailly invests the character of the King with a sombre dignity and a stern yet touching melancholy which contrast strangely with the *insouciance* and philosophic gaiety of Frédérick Lemaître.

Had Wallack been equally well supported in London, the English version of *Don César* (we allude of course to that produced at the Princess's Theatre) would have lost little by comparison with the original; whereas, from the entire absence of that *ensemble* for which the French stage is so justly celebrated, and which is so rarely met with in our theatres, the interesting and effective drama of the Porte Saint Martin, after having been horribly mutilated in order that it might *play closer*, was only saved from the fate which awaited all the other translations of the same piece by the admirable acting of *Don César* himself, and the ever charming Fanny Stirling.

#### JENNA.

Born in 1805 at Cottenchy, a village in the Département de la Somme. At the age of twenty, he abandoned the medical profession for the stage, and after playing for some time at the Versailles theatre, 'was engaged at the Porte Saint Martin, where he made a very successful *début* in 1825, as the *Major d'Hermouville* in *les Frères à l'Épreuve*. In 1831, he performed alternately at the Odéon and Porte Saint Martin, both of which theatres were then under the management of M. Harel, and in 1833 went to the Gaité, where he remained until the destruction of that theatre by fire, February 20, 1835. On its being rebuilt eight months after he returned thither, his engagement not having expired; and in 1838 reappeared at the Porte Saint Martin, where his principal creations have been *Latude* in the piece of that name, *Sécherin* in *Mathilde*, and *Antoine Caussade* in *la Dame de Saint Tropez*.

Jenna is not only an actor of real talent, but of indefatigable perseverance and industry: he bestows more thought and study on each of his parts than many of his comrades give to half their *répertoire*, and the result is a perfection both as regards his conception and performance of a character which is rarely to be met with in a *Boulevard* theatre. Naturally gifted with a manly and expressive countenance, a good figure, and a clear sonorous voice, he can, when necessary, so dis-

guise these personal advantages as to appear positively repulsive; and this power of adapting his look and manner to the personage he represents is particularly manifested in *la Dame de Saint-Tropez*, his *Antoine Causade* in which piece is a most finished specimen of rascality.

Jemma is a member of the Dramatic Authors' Association, his admission into which society dates from the first performance of his comedy, *les Deux Maris*, produced at the Porte Saint Martin October 20, 1838.

#### LEMAITRE (Frédéric).

This celebrated *artiste*, son of an architect of talent, was born at Havre, we believe in 1800. When quite a child, he used to amuse his parents by reciting verses from the works of different dramatists, with a table cloth thrown over his shoulders, a napkin bound across his forehead, and a paper-knife in his hand.

In 1820, Frédéric was admitted a pupil of the Conservatoire, and two years later he presented himself at a public examination of dramatic aspirants held at the Odéon, in the hope of obtaining an engagement, but had only one voice recorded in his favour—that of Talma!—Many years after, on being asked by a friend at what theatre and in what character he had first appeared on the stage, he answered with a smile: “At the *Variétés Amusantes*, as the lion in *Pyrame et Thisbé—on all fours.*” “Such,” says one of his biographers, “was the commencement of the ill-luck which has attended him through life. He was playing *Thisbé’s* lion when he ought to have played *Pyramus*; he was at *Franconi’s* when he should have been at the *Ambigu*; at the *Ambigu* when his place was at the *Odéon*; and is now at the *Porte Saint Martin*, when he ought to be at the *Théâtre Français.*”

From the *Variétés Amusantes* Frédéric went to the *Funambules*, and from thence to the *Cirque Olympique*, where he played parts which no one else would take; and, though frequently hissed, was never applauded, except on one occasion. During the performance of a grand spectacle called *la Mort de Kleber*, in which our hero personated a confidant, he

was surprised at being interrupted in the middle of a long speech by a general burst of laughter. Not only were the audience convulsed, but even the actor who was listening to his tirade had the greatest difficulty in maintaining his gravity. Taking advantage of a pause, Frédéric asked the latter what was the cause of this unexpected hilarity, and received for answer an intimation that his right whisker (one of a pair which he had stuck on to look more than usually ferocious) had fallen off. "Is that all?" said the re-assured confidant; and, lifting up his hand above his head as if to give additional force to the bombast he was uttering, he suddenly let it fall again, neatly removing the remaining whisker, to the great amusement of the audience, by whom the feat was enthusiastically applauded.

After continuing his dramatic apprenticeship at the Odéon, where he was still condemned to play the confidants, though in tragedy instead of in spectacle, Frédéric offered his services to the manager of the Ambigu, who had just accepted *l'Auberge des Adrets*, a melodrama which appeared to him (and was in reality) sufficiently common place to admit of the principal character being entrusted to a *débutant*. He did not, therefore, scruple to admit the young actor into his company, and gave him the part of *Redmond* to study. The eventful night came, and the two first acts of the piece having gone off very heavily, *l'Auberge des Adrets* was generally regarded as a failure; Frédéric, however, suddenly hit upon the ingenious idea of making *Redmond* a comic instead of a melodramatic rascal, and began to introduce all kinds of drolleries into his part, which, backed by the equally laughable acting of Serres, put the audience into an ecstasy of delight, and decided the triumphant success of piece and performer.

One of the authors had sent his *bonne* to see the first representation, and was waiting anxiously for her return in order to know the result, when, to his surprise, she came back hardly able to speak for laughing. "Ah! Sir," she exclaimed, as soon as she had recovered her breath, "what an excellent piece! how funny it is! I am sure I never laughed so much in all my life!" "What!" cried the amazed and indignant author, "laugh at my *melodrama*! This comes of entrusting the leading character to an actor *sans conscience*!" However, on going himself to see the piece, he laughed like the rest, and, following the

example of his *collaborateur*, pocketed his author's dues with great good humour (1).

We have no space to follow Frédéric Lemaitre from one theatre to another, nor to dwell upon the numerous creations which have marked his progress up the ladder of fame. *Robert Macaire* at the Folies Dramatiques, *Kean* at the Variétés, and a dozen equally brilliant conceptions at the Porte Saint Martin, have obtained for him a popularity to which Bouffé himself can hardly pretend. *Georges* in *Trente Ans*, *Jacques Ferrand* in *les Mystères de Paris*, *Ruy Blas*, *Don César de Bazan*, are only a few out of the long list of dramatic triumphs achieved by this extraordinary actor, whose profound knowledge of human nature is even more remarkable than his genius. To such an extent, indeed, does he carry his desire to be natural, that not only are the minutest shades of each character entrusted to him studied with the most laborious care and attention, but even the smallest details of costume and accessories become each in their turn the object of grave consideration. Thus, when playing *Baridon* in *la Tour de Nesle*, he appeared as prime minister in the fourth act, clad in velvet, but with a plain woollen shirt, whereas the courtiers around him wore fine linen garnished with lace. On his being asked the reason of this apparent inconsistency, he replied that he did not wear a linen shirt because, at the epoch referred to in the piece, they were not in common use; "nay more," added he, "a century after, Isabel of Bavaria was reproached with extravagance for having two made of linen in her *trousseau*."

While studying the character of *Mephistopheles* in *Faust*, Frédéric for a long time tried in vain to acquire the peculiar tone of satanic laughter which he considered appropriate to the mysterious personage; and at last, despairing of success, thought of substituting for it a diabolical grin. Placing himself before a looking-glass, he commenced

(1) One evening, during the performance of *l'Ange des Adrets*, Frédéric came forward as *Robert Macaire*, and addressed the audience as follows:

"Gentlemen, we are unable to kill a gendarme this evening, the actor who usually sustains the character being indisposed; however, as the management desire most anxiously to please you, I am instructed to inform you that to-morrow night two gendarmes will be put to death."

This was said, not because the actor was really ill, but because Frédéric thought a little episode of the kind would have a beneficial effect on the treasury by ensuring a full house on the next evening, and the event proved that he was right.



distorting his face into every variety of grimace, when suddenly happening to glance across the street, he beheld some of his opposite neighbours leaning out of their windows, and staring at him with the most unfeigned horror. Annoyed at being thus overlooked, he hastily pulled down a *jalousie* which, creaking in its rapid descent, furnished him with the very sound which he had so long ineffectually sought, and which, deeply graven in his memory, was repeated by him with such marvellous effect on the stage.

The same strict adherence to Nature, however, which constitutes the great perfection and charm of his acting, is occasionally misconstrued by the public, as was once the case during the performance of *Trente Ans* at Orleans: in this piece Frédéric, who had played the part of *Georges* with his accustomed talent, and had been immensely applauded up to the end of the fourth act, was hissed in the fifth because he took snuff out of a piece of paper. The good people of Orleans, thinking, no doubt, that an actor of Frédéric's celebrity ought to have come better provided, and never reflecting for a moment how unlikely it was that a man on the verge of starvation (as *Georges* is represented to be) should carry about with him such a luxury as a snuff-box, expressed their displeasure accordingly; and he, guessing the motive of their anger, threw away the piece of paper, and substituted for it a gold snuff-box, which he happened to have in his pocket. This (supposed) *amende honorable* completely restored the good humour of the audience, and Frédéric and his *tabatière* (especially the latter) were greeted with loud acclamations.

This great tragedian, for tragedian he is, albeit the arena of his glory be a minor instead of a national theatre, and his poets Victor Hugo and Alexandre Dumas instead of Corneille and Racine, has since the above was written added to his long list of brilliant creations that of *Fabien* in *le Docteur Noir*, a piece of little intrinsic merit, and entirely indebted for its success to his wonderfully energetic acting.

#### LINVILLE.

If Clarence be one of the best *jeunes premiers* in Paris, Linville is

assuredly one of the worst. He is said to have been once a favourite at Belleville: if he had consulted his own interest he would never have crossed the *barrière*.

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MARIUS.

One of the most useful and least brilliant members of the company.

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NOESSARD.

Simon-Pierre Moëssard was born in Paris, May 13, 1781. He has been many years attached to the Porte Saint Martin, where he has played in drama, vaudeville, burlesque, and even ballet, his best creation having been *Germany in Trente Ans*.

Moëssard is not only an extremely useful, and, notwithstanding his age, highly amusing actor, but a most worthy, liberal, and kind-hearted man, who is ready on all occasions to serve a fellow creature in distress, and whose compassion or sympathy no one ever implored in vain. He has long been *régisseur* of the theatre, a post held by him during the lesseeship of M. Harel, who was generally on bad terms with his company, and whose somewhat arbitrary messages to the different *artistes* were invariably transmitted through Moëssard, much to the dislike of the latter. Being once ordered to dismiss one of the underlings, who had incurred the displeasure of the manager, he was in the act of doing so (as was his wont) in the gentlest and most considerate manner possible, when M. Harel overhearing him exclaimed in a violent rage, "Sir, when I am in a passion, it is *your* duty to be in a passion likewise!"

Happily for Moëssard, all managers have not the same ideas of duty as M. Harel.

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MULLIN.

We have seen this actor play *Mesroux* in *la Biche aux Bois*, and can

bear unqualified testimony to his fitness for such parts. It is impossible to roll the eye more horribly or more effectively, and the mere tone of his voice (in his capacity of chief of the eunuchs, *bien entendu*) is enough to give the stoutest-hearted child a most unenviable nightmare.

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#### NESTOR.

A very droll and very original *comique*, who was once a member of the Gymnase, and who subsequently became manager of the Reims theatre. He is rather inclined to overact his parts, and occasionally mistakes exaggeration for humour, but is on the whole extremely amusing. Among his best personations at the Porte Saint Martin have been *Gobetout in Aujourd'hui et dans Cent Ans*, *Fanfreluche in la Biche au Bois*, and *le Père Sournois in les Petites Danaïdes*, in which last-named character he imitated Potier's look, dress, voice, and manner with surprising fidelity.

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#### PERRIN.

Some actors have too much confidence in their own powers; Perrin has too little. This, however, is a fault on the right side, and easily amended: indeed, since his very successful creation of *Remy* in *Marie-Jeanne*, we have observed a marked improvement in his acting. Let him but earn a few more rounds of applause (he *can* earn them if he will), and the timid embarrassment which still occasionally paralyses his efforts to amuse will altogether disappear.

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#### PONÇOT.

A young and promising dancer, who made his *début* at the Porte Saint Martin, in September 1845, in a *pas de deux* with M<sup>lle</sup> Camille.

## RAUCOURT.

This excellent actor was originally articled to a notary in Brittany, but soon quitted his master's office to join a strolling company, whose only theatre was a barn, and their audience some twenty or thirty peasants who, thoroughly tired with their day's work, were generally fast asleep before the first act was over. He afterwards played comic parts at Angers, then tragedy confidants at Brest, then young lovers at the Gymnase in Paris, and at last made a brilliant *début* at Bordeaux, in which city he remained ten years.

Raucourt first appeared at the Porte Saint Martin as *Morisseau* in *la Duchesse de la Vaubalière*, and by the finesse and vivacity of his acting contributed in no slight degree to the success of the piece. He subsequently played for a short time at the Palais Royal, but soon returned to the Porte Saint Martin, of which theatre he is one of the most valuable members. Among his best creations we may mention *le Maître d'École* in *les Mystères de Paris*, and *Colonel Perkins* in *Lady Seymour*, nor must we forget his very excellent performance of *Don César* in Victor Hugo's revived play of *Ruy Blas*.

Raucourt's acting is at once natural and dramatic; it is effective without exaggeration, and amusing without buffoonery. In drama he is dignified and energetic, in comedy he is gay and lively, but never ridiculous nor trivial. He so fully enters into the spirit of every character assumed by him as always to appear as much at home in each of his personations as if he had sustained the part all his life. This facility of identifying himself with his different creations is one of Raucourt's most precious qualities, and renders him as great a favourite with dramatic authors (many of whom are largely indebted to his versatile talent) as he is with the public.

## TOURNAN.

Pierre-Bernard Tournan was born at Caen, October 28, 1804. He has been many years a member of the Porte Saint Martin, and is neither deficient in intelligence nor in original humour.

## VISSOT.

Viissot has been more than thirty years at this theatre, and can boast of having played in the *Pie Voleuse* in 1815, and in the *Biche au Bois* in 1845.

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AMANT (M<sup>lle</sup> PAULINE).

A plump merry-faced little actress, who makes up for her want of vocal and musical ability by the engaging *gentillesse* of her manner.

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CAMILLE (M<sup>lle</sup>).

A charming and graceful *danseuse*, whom we should like to see at the Académie Royale.

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CHARTON (M<sup>me</sup>).

M<sup>me</sup> Charton is a very serviceable without being a highly talented actress, being capable not only of efficiently sustaining a secondary character, but even of replacing, when necessary, a *premier sujet*. We do not mean to say that she plays *Marguerite de Bourgogne* as well as M<sup>lle</sup> Georges, or even M<sup>me</sup> Dorval, but she does her best, and if she seldom rises above, still seldomer sinks below, mediocrity.

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DÉSIRÉE (M<sup>lle</sup>).

A pretty *brunette*, who acts agreeably, dances neatly, and sings in tune. *Rara avis*, etc.

DHARVILLE (M<sup>lle</sup>).

The *belle* of the Porte Saint Martin since the departure of M<sup>lle</sup> Andréa, but lacking the grace and elegance of her predecessor. M<sup>lle</sup> Dharville possesses a pair of very fine eyes, which, in our opinion, are infinitely more attractive than her acting.

DUBOIS (M<sup>me</sup>).

Plays every variety of elderly female, from the "middle-aged lady" to the venerable grandmamma.

FICHER (M<sup>lle</sup>).

M<sup>lle</sup> Ficher might become a very pleasing actress, could she get rid of her drawling voice and stiff artificial manner.

GENOT (M<sup>me</sup>).

This lady first appeared at the Porte Saint Martin in October, 1845, as M<sup>me</sup> Pipelet in *Cabrion*. She has a lively bustling manner, and, when the part performed by her admits of a little exaggeration, is very droll.

GRAVE (M<sup>lle</sup>).

An admirable dresser; her toilette is always fresh and becoming, and did we know the name of her *couturière*, we should feel in duty bound to recommend her. M<sup>lle</sup> Grave has a prepossessing though not pretty

face and a symmetrical figure, and, were she to study Art less and Nature more, would be a very agreeable actress.

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LEVERGNE (M<sup>lle</sup>).

Never having seen this lady except in the character of a black, or rather tawny, Princess in *la Biche aux Bois*, we are not competent to say whether she is pretty or plain. The part then assumed by her was a very repulsive one, and little calculated to excite the sympathy of the audience ; but we doubt whether any actress in the company could have played it better.

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MIROY (M<sup>lle</sup> CLARISSE).

M<sup>lle</sup> Clarisse Miroy, better known as simply M<sup>lle</sup> Clarisse, was born April 20, 1820, and commenced her theatrical career when quite a child at the *Gymnase Enfantin*, where, according to the terms of the privilege, speaking on the stage was forbidden ; the actors being restricted to pantomime, while their parts were said or sung by the *régisseur* behind the scenes. M<sup>lle</sup> Clarisse, who appears even then to have been conscious that she possessed a sweet voice, soon grew tired of this compulsory silence, and quitted the theatre for that of M. Comte, where a young actress having been suddenly taken ill, she offered to replace her, guaranteeing to learn her part in one hour. This she did while she was dressing, and repeated it not in a parrot-like manner, but with so much spirit and vivacity, that she was rewarded by a round of applause. Subsequently, while at the *Gaité*, she performed a similar feat, playing an important character in *le Massacre des Innocens* at a few hours' notice.

M<sup>lle</sup> Clarisse remained two years with M. Comte, and then went to Lisbon, the French theatre in which city was at that time under the management of Paul, the ex-actor of the *Gymnase*. There "*la charmante*

blonde," as she was called, became a great favourite, notwithstanding one unlucky attempt on her part to act tragedy, when, being utterly unaccustomed to recite anything in the shape of poetry except vaudeville couplets, she repeated the few verses which constituted her rôle (that of Ophelia's *confidente* in Ducis's translation of *Hamlet*) in such a sing-song tone, that the tragedy was hissed down.

On the closing of the Lisbon theatre M<sup>lle</sup> Clarisse came to Paris, and appeared at the Panthéon, where she not only became the idol of the Quartier Latin, but also attracted the notice of M. Montigny, one of the managers of the Galté, who immediately engaged her. The grace and beauty of *la rose du Boulevard*, by which name she was soon universally known, added to the simplicity and *naïveté* of her acting, obtained for her a celebrity which was still further augmented by her admirable creation of *Marie* in *la Grâce de Dieu*.

In 1844 she made a successful *début* at the Porte Saint Martin as *Maritana* in *Don César de Bazan*, and has since created *Hortense* in *la Dame de Saint-Tropez*, and *Pauline* in *le Docteur Noir*.

M<sup>lle</sup> Clarisse, though she now resembles a full blown rather than a budding rose, is still a handsome woman, with expressive eyes, a fascinating smile, and a voice which has lost little if any of its original melody, and which has all the bell-like clearness of M<sup>lle</sup> Plessy's organ without its monotony. Since her engagement at the Porte Saint Martin, we have noticed a very decided improvement in her acting, to which her constant association with Frédéric Lemaitre, in all of whose recent triumphs she has had a share, has doubtless in no slight degree contributed. She was always remarkable for grace and sensibility, but it is only of late that she has added to these qualities others more essentially dramatic: her creation of *Hortense* in *la Dame de Saint-Tropez* has proved that, without ceasing to be unaffected and natural, she can display at will a degree of energy of which those who remember her merely as the *ingénue* of the Galté would hardly suppose her capable.

M<sup>lle</sup> Clarisse has recently attempted *Marie Jeanne*, the best creation of M<sup>me</sup> Dorval. To say that she played the character as well as her predecessor would be incorrect, nothing finer than M<sup>me</sup> Dorval's performance of the bereaved mother having been seen on the French stage for many a day; but M<sup>lle</sup> Clarisse's *Marie Jeanne* was not the less a



clever piece of acting, and in every respect worthy of her high professional reputation.

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NEHR (M<sup>lle</sup>).

M<sup>lle</sup> Elisa Nehr is a pretty *blonde*, and a very graceful dancer.

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REY (M<sup>me</sup> JOURDAIN).

Born in 1821 at Marseilles. At eleven years of age she was principal *dansusee* in a juvenile *corps de ballet* starring through France, and at fifteen was engaged as second dancer at Bordeaux. There she appeared as M<sup>lle</sup> Anaïs (her Christian name), and was thought to resemble Taglioni both in her face and style of dancing. Her health, however, obliged her to forsake the ballet for the drama, and having after much study and perseverance succeeded in mastering a strong southern accent and a tendency to lisp, she obtained an engagement at Rouen. In the following year (1837) she returned to Bordeaux, and remained there until 1839, when she came to Paris, and made a successful *début* (July 11) at the Renaissance, in *le Fils de la Folle*, under the name of M<sup>me</sup> Jourdain. After the closing of that theatre she went to the Porte Saint Martin, where, with the exception of a flying visit to the Odéon in December, 1842, (1) she has remained ever since.

M<sup>me</sup> Rey is a great favourite with us, and, we may add, with the public generally. She not only looks and dresses, but also talks like a lady; her countenance is extremely prepossessing and intelligent, and there is an attractive coquetry in her manner which contributes a peculiar charm to her acting. We have rarely heard a voice at once so clear, and (to make use of an untranslatable French expression) so *mordante*; and there is sufficient point and piquancy in her delivery to atone for

(1) She was engaged there, with the sanction of her own manager, for the express purpose of creating *la Comtesse de Lerebourg* in *la Main Droite et la Main Gauche*.

any want of either in her author. In drama she is as remarkable for sensibility and feeling as she is in comedy for vivacity and grace; nor do we know many actresses on the French stage more capable of personating with equal excellence and equal success the *jeune première* and the *grande coquette* (1).

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RICHARD (M<sup>lle</sup>).

M<sup>lle</sup> Richard is a clever and agile dancer, but there is little of the *sylphide* in her face, and still less in her figure.

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ROSETTE (M<sup>lle</sup>).

A pretty and elegant *coryphée*.

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The following are among the best dramas, spectacles, and ballets composing the *répertoire* of this theatre.

La Tour de Nesle.  
 Le Barbier du Roi d'Aragon.  
 Antony.  
 Angèle.  
 Trente Ans.  
 Mathilde.  
 Richard d'Arlington.  
 Les Deux Serruriers.  
 Don César de Bazan.  
 La Dame de Saint-Tropez.  
 Ruy-Blas.

(1) M<sup>me</sup> J. Rey has lately quitted the Porte Saint Martin for the Théâtre Moulpensiér.

Marie Jeanne.

L'Ombre.

Aujourd'hui et dans Cent Ans.

Le Royaume des Femmes.

Les Petites Danaïdes.

La Biche au Bois.

## CHAPTER XII.

### — AMBIGU COMIQUE.

BOULEVARD SAINT MARTIN.

*Manager, M. Béraud (1).*

AUDINOT, an actor of the Comédie Italienne, was the original founder of this theatre (2). He began by establishing a puppet show at the Foire Saint Laurent, but soon removed to the Boulevard du Temple, where in 1769 he opened a new theatre, bearing the name of Théâtre de l'Ambigu Comique. There the puppets were soon succeeded by children, some of whom in 1772 were summoned by M<sup>me</sup> Dubarry to Choisy, where they played in presence of Louis XV. These very juvenile performers were by degrees replaced by others, averaging from fifteen to eighteen years of age, and the latter were in their turn superseded by men and women. Audinot's own daughter Eulalie was one of the most promising members of his infantine company; at the early age of eight years she was renowned for the precocity of her talent.

(1) Author of several dramas.

(2) He was also an author, but of no very good repute. His operetta called *le Tonnelier* remained for some years in the *répertoire* of the Opéra Comique.

The pieces most in vogue at this period were historical and romantic pantomimes, and one of the most successful was *le Maréchal des Logis*, founded on the following incident in real life. A young and pretty girl, while traversing the forest of Villers-Cotterets, was attacked by two robbers, who, after despoiling her of her purse and other valuables, tied her to a tree and were about to maltreat her still further, when a brave dragoon, hearing her cries, came to her rescue, put the robbers to flight, and restored her to her parents. This romantic story was duly chronicled in the papers of the time, and the bold dragoon not only had the honour of being presented to Marie Antoinette, who was anxious to see so celebrated a character, but was eventually united to her whom he had the good fortune to save.

In 1790, Audinot took into partnership Arnould, a dramatist of some repute, who subsequently became sole manager of the theatre. He did not long retain his post, nor were his numerous successors more fortunate; indeed, until Corse, an ancient actor of the Théâtre Montansier, became director, supported by M. de Puisaye, a wealthy capitalist, the Ambigu, which the retirement of Audinot had robbed of every *prestige*, was little frequented by the public. Then, however, the production of *M<sup>me</sup> Angot au Sérail de Constantinople*, a piece which was played more than two hundred nights, proved a windfall to the treasury; and in less than fifteen years from that period the manager netted more than forty thousand pounds clear profit, thanks to two authors in particular, Caignez and Guilbert de Pixérécourt, called respectively the Racine and the Corneille of melodrama. At that time, also, pieces were only paid for at the following rate; 200 francs (£ 8) in all were given for a comedy in one act, and for a piece in three acts only nine francs for each performance; with such trifling *droits d'auteur* to subtract from the receipts, it is no wonder that the manager made his fortune.

In 1823, a few years after the death of Corse, Audinot, son of the founder, became director, and on his death in 1826, his widow, M<sup>me</sup> Audinot, retained the management jointly with Messrs. Sennepart and Schmoll.

Among the famous actors at the Ambigu for 30 years, viz., from 1800 to 1830, were Tautin, Frenoy, Raffile, Stokleit, and Itévalard, the model

performer of tyrants and brigands. Of the latter, who afterwards managed a provincial company, an amusing anecdote is told. One evening, during a representation by his *troupe* of a melodrama, in which a town was bombarded, some pieces of a shell flew towards the orchestra, but luckily wounded no one. Next day, 'as Révalard feared that his receipts might suffer from this accident, he caused the following announcement to be printed in the hills. "Those persons who may honour us with their presence this evening are informed that the town will be bombarded without fire arms (*à l'arme blanche*)."

It is also said of Révalard that, after having given in a small country town several performances to empty benches, he stuck up a bill the day before his departure to this effect: "The company of M. Révalard, deeply grateful for the kind support with which the inhabitants continue to favour them, have the honour to announce that, instead of leaving the town on Saturday as they had intended doing, they will set out to-morrow morning, at six o'clock."

The Ambigu Comique, built in 1769, after having existed more than half a century, was totally consumed by fire in the night of July 13, 1827, the anniversary of the death of Audinot, its founder. A new privilege was given to M<sup>re</sup> Audinot and M. Sennepart, and the site for the new building (the present theatre) was chosen at the corner of the Rue de Bondy, on the Boulevard Saint Martin. Twenty three months after the conflagration, June 7, 1829, the Ambigu re-opened, and among the company assembled to celebrate its inauguration was the Duchesse de Berry.

The career of the new theatre, however, was for some years anything but prosperous, and the management successively fell into the hands of upwards of a dozen directors, each of whom, notwithstanding the engagement of Frédéric Lemaitre, Bocage, Guyon, Francisque *alacé*, M<sup>re</sup> Dorval and Théodrine, retired in turn, unable to overcome the apathy of the public. One of these managers, the Baron de Cès-Caupenne, was at the same time director of the Galté, and, finding himself unequal to attend to the administration of two theatres at once, eventually resigned that of the Ambigu to M. Cormon, author of *le Roman Comique*, and several other successful pieces. Previously, however, to his doing so, he is said to have been present by invitation at an

entertainment given by one of his actors in celebration of a family marriage, and to have remarked there among the company a very pretty and elegant young girl. He was so struck with her that, without even knowing her name, he offered her a box at the Ambigu for the following night, and in the course of the evening, turning to a by-stander, asked who she was.

"That young lady," replied the individual addressed, "is M<sup>lle</sup> Sanson, daughter of the Paris executioner."

M. de Cès-Caupenne started back in horror, and, addressing a *distingué* looking man near him, said: "Can it be true, sir, that that very pretty young lady (pointing to her) is the daughter of an executioner?"

"I know it perfectly well, sir," was the reply, "for I myself am the executioner of Beauvais, and my cousin, whom you see yonder at the piano, holds the same office at Rouen."

The poor Baron slunk away without his hat, and it was a long time before he again paid his court to a beauty at a *fête de noce*.

After remaining closed several months, the Ambigu re-opened May 4, 1844, under the management of M. Antony Béraud, a clever dramatic author, and an intelligent and able director, since whose accession the theatre has enjoyed a very fair share of public favour. Many anecdotes are related of him, and one in particular is perfectly characteristic of the man. A young actress in his company was rehearsing the part of a girl in love; she, however, played it so coldly and carelessly, that M. Béraud exclaimed in a rage: "Mademoiselle, have you no sweet-hearts?"

"No, sir," she replied.

"Then, *régisseur*," cried the manager, "if by to-morrow M<sup>lle</sup> — has not at least *one* sweetheart, *fine her*" (1).

Eccentric though he may be, M. Béraud is not the less an excellent and worthy man, and one who in every respect deserves the popularity enjoyed by him.

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1. The *amercé* or *fine* for missing a rehearsal, the one most frequently incurred, varies from two to ten francs, according to the theatre.

## THE COMPANY.

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### ADALBERT.

In almost every piece performed at this theatre a song or chorus is introduced for Adalbert. In *les Bohémiens de Paris* he sang the solos in the celebrated *ronde* beginning, "*Fouler le bitume ;*" and in *Paris la Nuit, les Etudiants*, and a dozen other dramas, his agreeable though rather thin tenor voice has been called into requisition. He not only sings very fairly, but is also an amusing *comique*.

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### ARNAULT.

Recently engaged by M. Béraud. In the spring of the present year he, as well as his wife, M<sup>me</sup> Naptal-Arnault, were members of the Odéon company.

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### BARON (ALFRED).

Formerly at the Odéon. His *début* at the Ambigu took place in October, 1846, as *Aramis* in *les Mousquetaires*. He acts with spirit and ease, and has an excellent delivery.

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### CHILLY.

Chilly is, in our opinion, after Frédéric Lemaitre, the best actor in any of the Boulevard theatres. Born December 2, 1807, at Stéuay, in the Département de la Meuse, he came to Paris on his father's death,



and obtained a situation as clerk at a very low salary. By dint of great economy he contrived to save enough money to pay for a pit ticket (30 sous) at the Porte Saint Martin, where he happened to enter into conversation with his next neighbour, a young man whom he discovered to be as fond of the theatre as he was himself. They became friends, and soon after his new acquaintance proposed to him to act with him *en amateur* : Chilly grasped at the idea, and in another year, not content with private performances, made his first public *début* at the Odéon, to which theatre after a short provincial excursion he subsequently returned, and created there *Louis XIII.* in *l'Homme au Masque de Fer*. Following his manager, M. Harel, to the Porte Saint Martin, he eventually quitted Paris for Holland, where he remained a year, and then, retracing his steps homewards, appeared at the Ambigu with great success, as *Arède* in *Christophe le Suédois*. His creations at that theatre have since been numerous, and among those which do him most honour we may instance *Montorgueil* in *les Bohémiens de Paris*, *Ulric* in *le Miracle des Roses*, *Cabestan* in *les Tatinians*, and *Mordaunt* in *les Mousquetaires*.

Chilly is gifted with far more intelligence than generally falls to the lot of a melodramatic performer, and possesses many qualities which an Ambigu audience is hardly capable of appreciating. There indeed his energy and the *mordant* irony of his delivery are understood and highly relished, but the finer and more delicate touches, as well humorous as pathetic, which constitute the great charm of his acting, are comparatively lost. We regret that an artist of such versatile and genuine talent is not where we should like to see him—at the Théâtre Français.

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COQUET (CHARLES).

A very funny actor, with a very funny face.

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## LACHESSENNIÈRE.

A rather tame *jeune premier*, whose worst fault is his want of animation.

## LATOUCHE.

A rising young performer, who will rise higher provided that he continues to act as he now does, with spirit and without exaggeration.

## LAURENT.

One of the drollest and liveliest *comiques* on the Boulevard. His acting as *Chalumeau* in *les Bohémiens de Paris* is extremely smart and racy.

## MATIS.

Matis is an actor of talent and originality, one of his best creations being *l'Abruti* in *les Bohémiens de Paris*. He also played *Cromwell* in *les Mousquetaires* effectively and well.

## MÉLINGUE.

Etienne Mélingue is the son of an old soldier, and before embracing the dramatic profession was successively a carpenter and a carver in wood. His earliest appearance on any stage took place at M<sup>me</sup> Saqui's theatre on the occasion of a benefit, and the success which attended his first essay induced him to give up carving for acting, and to practise at the Salle Chantierine and the *Dantieu* theatres until he obtained a

provincial engagement, according to the terms of which he agreed not only to play drama and vaudeville, but also to paint scenery and invent costumes. He had hardly finished painting one set of scenes when the manager became a bankrupt, before his theatre had even opened, and Mélingue was forced to return to Paris, where, having nothing better in view, he signed an engagement for Guadeloupe, and embarked at Havre January 15, 1830.

The first representations of the motley company assembled at Guadeloupe were crowned with success, but an *émeute* among the blacks, who went so far one evening as to take possession of the places in the theatre especially reserved for the whites, soon obliged the governor to order a suspension of the performances. The unfortunate actors, thus thrown out of employ, were compelled to gain their livelihood by giving lessons in dancing or fencing; and Mélingue, recollecting that he had once been a scene-painter, published the following advertisement :

" Etienne Mélingue, artist, takes likenesses at all prices and in all sizes."

He did not want for customers, and was soon able to pay his passage back to France. Once arrived in Paris, he obtained an engagement at the Porte Saint Martin, and subsequently left it, after his marriage with M<sup>lle</sup> Théodrine, for the Ambigu, where a succession of able creations, and especially those of *Caratier* in *les Talismans* and *D'Artagnan* in *les Mousquetaires*, have made him extremely popular.

Mélingue (who is said to be engaged at the Théâtre Montpensier), is a tall handsome man, and his acting is energetic and impressive, with less tendency to rant than might reasonably be expected from a Boulevard performer. He is, moreover, a clever sculptor, several of his *statuettes*, particularly Duprez in *Guillaume Tell*, and Bouffé in *le Gamin de Paris*, being admirable likenesses.

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#### SAINT-ERNEST.

This sterling actor was originally a medical student at Clermont, and

afterwards assistant to a schoolmaster in the Passage Cendrier in Paris. He, however, soon turned his thoughts to the stage, and his earliest dramatic essays were made in the provinces, where he was in the habit of attending the different fairs, and of reciting scraps of tragedy for the amusement of the country bumpkins. But better days were in store for him, and we find him not long after engaged at the Panthéon on the opening of that theatre. From thence he went to the Ambigu, where he still is, and where we hope he long will be; for neither the management nor the *habitués* could well afford to lose him.

St.-Ernest has played every kind of part, but has of late years devoted himself almost exclusively to the *pères nobles*: in this particular line of characters, as indeed in every other assumed by him, his acting is remarkable for an earnestness and a frank and simple dignity rarely met with in a minor theatre. Among the creations which do him the most credit are *Comte de Médicis*, *le Facteur*, and *Richard Davis* in the new drama of *le Marché de Londres*.

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#### VERNER.

Verner is a tall and fine-looking man, who acts very effectively and at the same time very naturally: his *Lionel* in *la Peste Noire*, a drama produced about eighteen months ago, was a most masterly creation.

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#### ADALBERT (M<sup>me</sup>).

A lively and rather *piquante* little actress, who plays *soubrettes* and light comic characters very pleasantly.

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#### ARMAND (M<sup>me</sup>).

An actress of provincial celebrity, whose *début* at the Ambigu took

place May 16, 1846, as *Stella* in *l'Étoile du Berger*. She is not without talent, but has been much overrated, especially with regard to her vocal abilities; not only is her voice harsh and disagreeable, but she sings occasionally, we may say frequently, out of tune (1).

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GUYON (M<sup>me</sup> ÉMILIE).

Born October 2, 1821, in a village near Dijon. In 1835 she came to Paris, and three years later commenced her studies at the Conservatoire, receiving instruction both from her cousin Guyon, and from Samson. After a little practice in the *banière*, she came out at the Renaissance as *la Fille du Cid*. Her success was decisive, and in 1841 she was engaged at the Théâtre Français, which she quitted in 1843 for an arena far better suited to her powers—the Ambigu. There M<sup>me</sup> Guyon (who has for some time been married to her cousin, the *sociétaire* of the Français,) is as much a Queen as Rachel or Grisi are in their respective theatres: she is adored by the *titis*, and her entrance on the stage is invariably hailed with rounds of applause. Nor are these demonstrations of public favour unmerited, for she is not only a handsome woman, but an actress of real and essentially dramatic talent, and is in no respect inferior to the former sovereign of the Ambigu, M<sup>me</sup> Mélingue.

She is seen to peculiar advantage in her last creation, that of *Lucy Stendhal* in *le Marché de Londres*, in one or two scenes of which piece she surpasses in our opinion any of her former efforts. We have rarely seen more powerful or more effective acting.

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JOUBE (M<sup>lle</sup> HORTENSE).

The Déjazet of the Ambigu, and by no means a bad *Boulevard* substitute for the great original.

(1) As this is on the point of going to press, we are informed that M<sup>me</sup> Arnaud's engagement with the manager of the Ambigu has just been cancelled by mutual consent.



LUCIE (M<sup>lle</sup>).

M<sup>lle</sup> Lucie Mabire is a native of the *Banlieue*, and first appeared at the Ambigu in 1841. She has remarkably pretty eyes, and is a pleasing though not very brilliant actress.

NAPTAL (M<sup>lle</sup>).

M<sup>lle</sup> Naptal, whose real name is Planat, of which Naptal is merely the anagram, after a preparatory *début* at the Hôtel Castellane, appeared some four or five years ago at the Théâtre Français as *Célimène* in *le Misanthrope*, and *Valérie*. Her success at that time was not sufficient to justify the committee in engaging her, but she became subsequently a member of the company, and played in *le Gendre d'un Millionnaire*, *la Femme de Quarante Ans*, and several other pieces.

On the opening of the Odéon she was engaged by Bocage to play leading characters in tragedy and comedy, her first essay being *Marcelle* in Rotrou's *Saint-Genest*. At the close of the season she quitted the theatre, and becoming soon after M<sup>me</sup> Arnault by her marriage with the actor of that name, was engaged together with her husband at the Ambigu, where she made her *début* October 14, 1846, as *Lucile* in *la Closerie des Genêts*.

M<sup>me</sup> Naptal Arnault has a pair of very expressive eyes, a good figure, and is altogether a pretty woman : her voice is musical and distinct, and she treads the stage well. She should, however, confine herself wholly to comedy, where she is infinitely more at home than either in tragedy or drama.

RIVAL (M<sup>lle</sup>).

A pretty and agreeable *ingénue*, formerly a member of the Odéon, whose *début* at the Ambigu took place August 23, 1846, in *le Rôdeur*.

We have no space to mention in detail the remaining members of the company, among whom the best are Messrs. Collier and Stainville, M<sup>me</sup> Marie Boutin (a pretty and agreeable actress), Daniel, Emma (a promising *débutante*), Lemaire, and Sylvain.

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We give a list of the most popular pieces in the *répertoire* of the Ambigu :

Les Bohémiens de Paris.  
 Les Amans de Murcie.  
 L'Abbaye de Castro.  
 Le Facteur.  
 Madeleine.  
 Le Rôdeur.  
 Jacques Cœur.  
 Paris la Nuit.  
 L'Ouvrier.  
 Gaspardo.  
 Enlalie Pontois.  
 Les Talismans.  
 Les Mousquetaires.  
 Le Marché de Londres.  
 La Closerie des Genêts.

## CHAPTER XIII.

### GAITÉ.

BOULEVARD DE TEMPLE.

*Manager, M. Meyer.*

THE origin of this theatre, the most ancient of any on the Boulevards, may be traced as far back as 1760, in which year there existed on the site of the present building a wooden structure, on the *façade* of which was inscribed *Salle des Grands Danseurs*. On the destruction of this theatre by fire, a new one was built in its place in 1770 by Nicolet, who, like his father before him, had been the Harlequin of the company.

In 1772 he took his troop to Choisy to play before Louis XV. and M<sup>me</sup> Dubarry, and obtained the royal permission to call his *spectacle* the *Théâtre des Grands Danseurs du Roi*. Among his actors (1) was a very intelligent monkey, whose antics were highly relished by the public, and whose imitation of Molé of the Théâtre Français was considered ex-

(1) A very popular member of Nicolet's *troupe* was Taconet, who was born in 1739, and died in 1773 at the *Hôpital de la Charité*. He was both actor and author, and was so useful to Nicolet that the latter, coming to see him on his death bed, said to the medical attendant: "Spare no effort, Sir, to save him; I would give a hundred *louis* rather than lose him."

"Monsieur Nicolet," whispered Taconet, almost at his last gasp: "couldn't you give me a crown of it in advance?"



tremely clever. The *répertoire* was mostly composed of grand spectacles and pantomimes, the *entr'actes* being devoted to exhibitions of feats of strength and agility.

About 1789, after the death of Nicolet, the theatre took the name of Théâtre de la Gaité; and the pieces hitherto in vogue were replaced by revolutionary dramas and even by Molière's comedies, among others by *Georges Dandin* and *le Médecin malgré lui*.

In 1795 Ribié, who had originally been one of the undertings employed in the service of the theatre, became manager of the Gaité, to which he gave the name of *Théâtre d'Emulation*: on his resigning his post, however, in 1799 to M. Coffin Rosny, an *homme de lettres*, the title of Théâtre de la Gaité was restored. Six years later, in 1805, Ribié again became director, his immediate predecessor having been an actor of the name of Mayeur de Saint Paul: the first successful piece produced after his return was *le Pied de Mouton*, a fairy spectacle, which had an immense run.

In March, 1808, M<sup>me</sup> Nicolet, widow of the original director, recovered the proprietorship of the theatre after a long lawsuit, and entrusted the management to her son-in-law, M. Bourguignon, who resolved on constructing a new *salle* in place of the original building. During its erection the company obtained permission to occupy the *Théâtre des Jeunes Artistes*, which had been lately suppressed; and eight months after the accession of M. Bourguignon, November 3, 1808, the new theatre opened with a grand spectacle, called *le Siège de la Gaité*.

The management of M<sup>me</sup> Nicolet's son-in-law was highly prosperous, as indeed it deserved to be, for seldom did a more honourable or more liberal man undertake the direction of a theatre. His purse was ever open to those in need of his assistance, and far from dismissing the aged actors whose infirmities rendered them nearly useless to him, he continued to pay them the salary which they had long ceased to earn, saying that they were the old workmen who had helped to construct the building, and it was but fair that as long as they lived they should have house-room in it.

This excellent manager dying December 19, 1816, his widow, in conjunction first with M. Dubois, and subsequently with M. Frédéric du Petit-Méré, continued to direct the theatre until her death, which took

place May 11, 1825. M. Guilbert de Pixérécourt, the celebrated melodramatic author, then obtained the vacant privilege, and he in turn was succeeded ten years later by Bernard Léon, shortly after whose accession, February, 21, 1835, the theatre was totally destroyed by fire, during a rehearsal of a fairy piece called *Bijou ou l'Enfant de Paris*. Nine months afterwards, November 19, 1835, the Galté, once more rebuilt, re-opened still under the management of Bernard Léon. He, however, was forced in 1837 to abdicate in favour of M. de Cès-Caupenne, who, in less than a year, resigned the directorship to Messrs. Montigny and Meyer. These able managers, partly owing to their own administrative skill, and partly to the immense success of the *Sommeur de Saint Paul* and of *la Grâce de Dieu*, completely restored the fallen fortunes of the Galté, of which (M. Montigny having become director of the Gymnase) M. Meyer is now the sole lessee.

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## THE COMPANY.

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### ALBERT.

Albert's first *début* on any stage took place in 1830, at the Odéon, and he was subsequently engaged at the Théâtre de Molière, which he quitted for the Ambigu. There both as author and actor he became deservedly popular, and his numerous creations, among which we may cite *Atar Gull*, *Héloïse et Abeillard*, and *l'Elève de Saint Cyr*, proved as well a source of pleasure to the public as of profit to the management. He first appeared at the Galté January 22, 1846, in his original and favourite character of *Atar Gull*.

Albert is essentially an actor of passion and energy; his voice is naturally harsh, but there is so much earnestness and real feeling in his delivery that the defects of his organ are forgotten. His countenance is manly and expressive, and setting aside an occasional exaggeration of gesture, he is one of the best melodramatic performers at present on the stage.

## CHARLET.

Charlet is a great favourite with the *titus*, and indeed with the public generally, being a most amusing low comedian, who deserves better parts than those usually confided to him.

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## DELAISTRE.

After a year's study in the Conservatoire, Delaistre accompanied Talma in his last professional tour, playing with him at Caen, Rouen, and Havre. He then made a *début* at the Français September 17, 1826, as *Tancrède*, and was engaged, but eventually quitted Paris together with M<sup>lle</sup> Georges for the provinces. In 1829 he appeared at the Odéon, and in 1830 at the Porte Saint Martin, both of which theatres were then under M. Harel's management. In 1836 he went to the Ambigu, and a year after quitted it for the Gaité, where he has created many important parts.

Delaistre is a thorough melodramatic actor, and has both the face and the voice for his peculiar *emploi*; he may be occasionally accused of exaggeration, but never of tameness or monotony. He has in some of his personations displayed a degree of rough energy which not unfrequently reminds us of Beauvallet; but he wants the classical dignity of that *artiste*.

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## DESHAYES.

An excellent delivery and an intelligent conception of every part he undertakes, added to an agreeable exterior, entitle Deshayes to rank among the most valuable members of the company.

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## DUBOURJAL.

Dubourjal has been engaged by turns at the Ambigu, the Nouveautés, the Variétés, and the Panthéon ; and during his entire career has been received by the public with great favour. He principally excels in low comedy and farce, but is an actor of very general utility.

## FRANCISQUE.

Francisque *jeune* (whose real name is Louis-Auguste Hutin) first appeared at M. Comte's theatre in 1823. For some time he played *gratuit*, but subsequently received fifteen francs a-month, or about five pence a-night. He afterwards acted in the provinces, and on one occasion, being cast the part of *Bütermann* in *Misanthropie et Repentir* at Caen (M<sup>lle</sup> Mars and Armand playing the leading characters), he found to his horror, just as the piece was about to begin, that he had no coat to appear in. He ran to the *costumier*, who produced an immense garment in which Lepeintre *jeune* would have been at his ease, and told him it would be an admirable fit. *Faute de mieux*, Francisque accepted it, and had the mortification of seeing the skirts of his coat sweep the ground, while the collar, covering his head, gave him the appearance of a Capuchin monk. He endeavoured to take it in by the aid of pins, and came on the stage pricking himself at every step, and looking so woe-begone, that M<sup>lle</sup> Mars and the public burst into a roar of laughter, and a little girl sitting in the *stalles d'orchestre* said to her mother : " Ah ! mamma, I am sure that is the gentleman who plays *Repentir* ! "

Some time after, in another provincial tour, he was invited to dine with some young men, and only accepted the invitation on condition that they would let him go in time for the performance. This was agreed to, and Francisque, calling a waiter of the inn where he lodged, who sometimes acted as his servant, and who, though not over-stocked with common sense, was passionately fond of the drama, said to him : " Go behind the scenes, and as soon as the first piece is over, come and let me know, for in the second I play the part of an old *chasseur*, and

shall not have too much time for dressing, as I have to put on a pair of gaiters which are very hard to button."

The waiter promised to obey, and Francisque went to dinner. Towards the end of the dessert back came the messenger with a very complacent and self-satisfied air.

"Is the first piece only just over?" inquired the actor.

"They have begun the overture of the second," said the *garçon*, but you will have plenty of time, for I have saved you half your trouble by buttoning your gaiters from top to bottom!"

It may be easily imagined that the *chasseur* missed his *entrée*.

Francisque came to Paris in 1831, and was engaged at the Ambigu; he subsequently became a member of the Galté, where he still remains. He is one of the most amusing and most natural actors on the *Boulevard*, and would be an acquisition to a theatre of far higher pretensions than that of M. Meyer. As *Baguenaudière* in *Atar Gull*, and as *Pierrot* in *la Grâce de Dieu*, he is exceedingly droll.

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#### GOUGET.

A young *amoureux*, whose chief merits are an excellent *tenue* and a clear unembarrassed delivery.

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#### SAINT-MAR.

A very useful and even valuable actor, whose dramatic career commenced, we believe, at the Folies Dramatiques. Physically speaking, he is more at home in virtuous than in vicious characters, there being nothing in his face suggestive either of a tyrant or a traitor. Thus, we admire him as the *Curé* in *Madeleine* far more than as *Laroche* in *le Canal Saint Martin*, though in both these parts, as indeed in all we have seen him play, he exhibits a degree of talent and intelligence rarely met with at the Galté.

## SERRES.

Whether at the Porte Saint Martin, Variétés, or Gaité, Serres has always been a lively and spirited actor, whose humour is as original as it is droll. His creation of *Bertrand* by the side of Frédéric Lemaitre's *Robert Macaire* first formed the ground-work of his reputation, which, if it cannot be said to have augmented since that famous epoch, has certainly not diminished.

## SURVILLE.

We are *very* partial to this actor, whom we look upon as one of the most finished *artistes* of any of the *Boulevard* theatres. The most difficult characters generally fall to his share, and he plays them with great judgment and discrimination; while the flexibility of his countenance enables him to assume at will every variety of expression, serious or comic, according to the exigencies of his part. It is our intention to pay him a compliment when we say that as *Martial* in *le Canal Saint Martin* he looked a thorough scamp, or, as we heard a highly interested old gentleman in the *orchestre* more appropriately express himself, "*un vrai brigand*."

ABIT (M<sup>me</sup>).

M<sup>me</sup> Abit, who was formerly a member of the Panthéon, is unquestionably one of the best melodramatic actresses on the French stage. Her gestures are usually (though not always) moderate and free from exaggeration, and she neither fatigues her own voice nor the ears of her audience by any unnecessary screaming or ranting. Her performance of *Madeleine* in the piece of that name is a terribly truthful piece of acting, nor have we often if ever seen anything more appalling, and at the same time more effective, than her personation of *la folle*.

CHÉZA (M<sup>me</sup>).

The *duègne* of the Gaité.

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COURTOIS (M<sup>lle</sup>).

A very pretty and very pleasing young actress, whom we could wish to see at a vaudeville theatre.

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DARMONT (M<sup>lle</sup>).

This most agreeable actress made her *début* at the Gaité May 21, 1845, as *Marie* in *la Grâce de Dieu*. She has a pretty face and an extremely lady-like manner.

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ÉLÉONORE (M<sup>lle</sup>).

Left the Panthéon for the Délassements Comiques, and the Délassements Comiques for the Gaité. M<sup>lle</sup> Éléonore is not bad-looking, and has a tolerably sweet voice.

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LÉONTINE (M<sup>lle</sup>).

M<sup>lle</sup> Léontine, generally called the Déjazet of the Boulevard, has been successively engaged at the Nouveautés, the Folies Dramatiques, the Cirque, and the Gaité, and is at the present day the idol of the *titis*, and indeed of most play-goers residing between the Place de la Bastille and the Château d'Eau. She does not owe her popularity so much to her talent as to the gaiety and *laissez aller* of her acting, and to the

cool assurance of her manner; but it must not be inferred from this that she possesses no sterling dramatic quality. On the contrary, she is eminently natural in whatever she says and does, and has more than once shown that, though her *forte* may be comedy, she is by no means deficient (however incongruous it may seem to couple the name of Léontine with *Il Penseroso* instead of *l'Allegro*) in earnestness of feeling and sensibility. One of her best characters is *Chonchon* in *la Grâce de Dieu*, with which personage indeed she has become so identified by her admirers as to be frequently called Léontine Chonchon, or Chonchon Léontine.

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#### MÉLANIE (M<sup>lle</sup>).

M<sup>lle</sup> Marie Mélanie Prieur, daughter of a naturalist, first appeared at the Variétés at the age of six years in *le Frère de Joerisse*, her *début* being immediately followed by an engagement. Not long after, she happened one evening while on the stage to forget a sentence in her part, and not catching what the prompter said, stooped towards the *trou du souffleur*, and seized hold of the manuscript; she then, with perfect coolness, read as much as she wanted to refresh her memory, and threw the book back, to the great satisfaction of the spectators.

Two years later she went to England with a juvenile company, and returned after an absence of four years to the Variétés, which theatre she quitted to accept an engagement at Bordeaux. She reappeared in Paris at the Porte Saint Martin as *l'Amour* in *les Petites Danaïdes*, and subsequently created with an immense success *Victorine* in the drama of that name, which Buckstone's adaptation has rendered as popular in London as it ever was in Paris. She afterwards played at the Odéon and Ambigu, and a few years ago became a member of the Gaité, where she has created among other parts *Marie* in *le Vagabond*, and *l'Orqueil* in *les Sept Châteaux du Diable*.

M<sup>lle</sup> Mélanie is still a fine woman, and though she has long since given up the very youthful characters for others more suitable to her age, has lost little if any of her original popularity.



SARA FÉLIX (M<sup>lle</sup>).

M<sup>lle</sup> Sara Félix, elder sister of M<sup>lle</sup> Rachel, made her first *début* at the Galté May 4, 1845, as *Louise* in the drama of *la Voisin*. She slightly resembles the great tragic actress in the expression of her eye and in the tone of her voice, but her short and rather stout figure contrasts disadvantageously with the classic elegance of her sister.

M<sup>lle</sup> Sara plays with energy and animation, and her singing is not deficient in taste.

SEN (M<sup>me</sup>).

M<sup>me</sup> Eugénie Sen is a pretty and graceful actress, lately transplanted from the Délassements Comiques to this theatre.

YAMINI (M<sup>me</sup>).

First appeared at the Galté in March, 1845. She has as yet had few opportunities of distinguishing herself, but promises well.

The following are among the best pieces in the *répertoire* of this theatre.

La Grâce de Dieu.  
 Le Sonneur de Saint-Paul.  
 Pierre Lenoir.  
 La Chambre Ardente.  
 Les Chevaux du Carrousel.  
 Le Vagabond.  
 Les Sept Châteaux du Diable.  
 Le Canal Saint-Martin.  
 La Coqueluche du Quartier.  
 Le Château des Sept Tours.  
 Margot.

## CHAPTER XIV.

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Cirque Olympique. — Cirque des Champs Élysées. — Théâtre Montpensier. — Folies Dramatiques. — Délassemens Comiques. — Beaumarchais. — Théâtre des Jeunes Élèves. — Luxembourg. — Funambules. — Lazari.

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### CIRQUE OLYMPIQUE.

BOULEVARD DU TEMPLE AND CHAMPS ÉLYSÉES.

*Manager, M. Gallois.*

SEVERAL years before the Revolution, a countryman of our own named Astley established a *manège* in the Faubourg du Temple, where entertainments were given, comprising equestrian evolutions and feats of strength and agility. This *spectacle*, on Astley's departure from Paris to London, where he founded the theatre which still bears his name, fell into the hands of Franconi, who transferred it to a new building erected on the site of the ancient Capuchin convent, where the Rue de la Paix now stands. He then resigned the management to his two sons, by whom the *manège* was transported to a theatre con-

structed under their superintendence in the Rue Monthabor, under the name of Théâtre du Cirque Olympique. There, in addition to feats of horsemanship, pantomimes were performed, in which, however, horses were invariably introduced, and often sustained the principal parts.

In November, 1809, the brothers Franconi quitted the Rue Monthabor to take possession of their ancient theatre in the Faubourg du Temple, and it is from this epoch that the prosperity of the Cirque-Olympique may be said to have dated. The pantomimes of Cuvelier and Ferdinand Laloue, admirably played by M<sup>me</sup> Minette Franconi, and the equestrian skill of the entire Franconi family, added to that of Messrs. Bastien and Bassin, and of M<sup>lles</sup> Lucie and Antoinette, were then as attractive to the public as are now the grand fairy and military spectacles of the same M. Laloue, and the address and grace of Baucher and M<sup>lle</sup> Caroline Loyo.

In the night of March 15, 1826, after the representation of a piece called *l'Incendie de Salins*, the Cirque Olympique was entirely destroyed by fire; and a site having been chosen for the present building on the Boulevard du Temple, it opened on March 31 of the ensuing year with a three-act piece called *le Palais, la Guinguette, et le Champ de Bataille*. From that period to the present day the novelties produced at this theatre have been for the most part military spectacles, the majority of them referring more or less to the career of Napoleon, who has been brought on the stage of the Cirque Olympique at least a dozen times.

Want of space compels us in our account of this and the remaining theatres to notice the different companies in a very cursory manner; we shall, however, endeavour briefly to mention the principal performers, male and female, in each *troupe*.

Of those belonging to the Cirque Olympique on the Boulevard du Temple the best are, perhaps:

Messrs. Gauthier, a rather handsome man, with a soldierylike figure.

Lebel,	}	both amusing <i>comiques</i> .
Dupuis,		

Edmond Galland, a tolerable *jeune premier*.

M<sup>me</sup> Gautier, sister of Bouffé, and herself an actress of merit.

Among the most successful pieces we have seen at the Cirque Olympique are *Murat*, *l'Empire*, and *le Cheval du Diable*.

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The present Cirque in the Champs Elysées, where performances are given from May to October, the theatre on the Boulevard du Temple being closed during the summer season, is specially devoted to displays of horsemanship and feats of strength and agility, and was first opened to the public early in the summer of 1838, under the direction of M. Dejean, who in 1844 resigned the management and proprietorship as well of this theatre as of that on the *boulevard* to M. Gallois. The equestrian company of the Cirque deserve a far more detailed mention than our limits will afford, a more talented *troupe* having rarely been collected together. Baucher, the bold and skilful trainer of *Partizan* and *Topaze*, the matchless Auriol (1), equally remarkable for strength, activity, and grace, the daring young rider Ducrow, Leclair, Cinizelli, the elegant and fascinating Camille Leroux (2), and the fearless Amazon Caroline Loyo (3), are magnets of attraction which render the Cirque in the Champs Elysées one of the most agreeable and most popular of all the Parisian theatres.

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## THÉÂTRE MONTPENSIER.

BOULEVARD DU TEMPLE.

*Proprietor, M. Alexandre Dumas. Acting Manager, M. Hippolyte Hostein.*

The privilege of this *salle*, now in process of construction on the site of the Hôtel Foulon on the Boulevard du Temple, has been lately

(1) Born at Toulouse, in 1808.

(2) Born in 1821. M<sup>lle</sup> Camille Leroux is a pupil of M. Adolphe Franconi, and made her first public *début* when only four years old.

(3) A pupil of Messrs. Petlier and Baucher. Her *début* took place in August, 1835.

granted to M. Alexandre Dumas, at the request of His Royal Highness the Duc de Montpensier, to whom the new theatre will be equally indebted for its existence and for its name. It is expected to open early in the winter, but the works are hardly in a sufficiently advanced state to justify any positive assertion. No official list of the company having as yet appeared, we are unable to give any authentic information on this head : it is, however, generally, reported that M<sup>me</sup> J. Rey, of the Porte Saint Martin, Mélingue of the Ambigu, and Boutin, an ex-actor of the same theatre, are engaged.

## FOLIES DRAMATIQUES.

BOULEVARD DU TEMPLE.

*Manager, M. Mourier (1).*

The original proprietor and founder of the Folies Dramatiques was M. Allaux, an architect, by whom the necessary privilege was obtained in 1830, and the theatre opened to the public January 22, 1831, under the management of M. Léopold, who soon abdicated in favour of M. Mourier, the present director. Among the artists of reputation who have at different periods been members of the company we may cite M<sup>me</sup> Théodrine and Léontine, Frédéric Lemaltre, who in 1834 attracted crowds to the Folies Dramatiques by his admirable performance of *Robert Macaire*, Philippe (surnamed *le Jovial* from one of his popular creations), and Odry.

In 1837, Messrs. Théodore and Hippolyte Cognard became for a short time joint directors with M. Mourier, and under their management the theatre attained a degree of prosperity which (notwithstanding the speedy dissolution of partnership, and the consequent re-installation of M. Mourier as sole director) has since that period rather increased than diminished. Many of the pieces in the *répertoire*, indeed, equal if they do not surpass in merit the majority

(1) Author, under the name of Valory, of several successful pieces.

of those produced at the Vandeville and the Variétés, nor is the acting very inferior to that witnessed in theatres of far higher pretension. It would be difficult to meet with more *ensemble* than is displayed by the company in general, or to find in one *troupe* better comic actors than P<sup>er</sup>la iseau, Dumoulin, Armand Villot, Heuzey, and Charles Potier, more agreeable actresses than M<sup>me</sup> Houdry (an excellent *duègne*) M<sup>me</sup> Charles Potier, and M<sup>lles</sup> Kleine and Leroux (1).

M<sup>lle</sup> Judith Bernat, now a member of the Variétés, was for a long time the pearl of the Folies Dramatiques, where she was surnamed the Rachel of the Boulevard; nor must we forget among the attractions formerly held out by this theatre to all admirers of youth and beauty the lively and *piquante* Florentine Collet, whose untimely death in March, 1845, at the early age of eighteen, robbed the stage of one of its most promising ornaments. We subjoin the titles of a few of the best pieces in the *répertoire* :

Le Télégraphe d'Amour.  
 La Femme, le Mari et l'Amant.  
 La Fille de l'Air.  
 La Grisette de Qualité.  
 Amour et Amourette.  
 Les premières Armes du Diable.  
 Sanscravate.  
 Les Amours d'une Rose (2).

## DÉLASSEMENTS COMIQUES.

BOULEVARD DU TEMPLE.

Manager, M. Ch. Pottin.

There existed formerly on the Boulevard du Temple a theatre bearing the name of *Délassements Comiques*, with which, however, the present

(1) A charming singer, M<sup>me</sup> Quidant, has lately been added to the company.

(2) In addition to the foregoing, several pieces belonging to the ancient *répertoire* of the Variétés, such as *Michel*, *les Amours de Paris*, and *Je fais mes Farces*, have been recently revived at the Folies Dramatiques with great success.

building, which was only opened to the public in 1841, has no connection. It was originally under the management of M. Ferdinand Laloue, author of most of the battle-pieces performed at the Cirque, and M. Edmond Triqueris; but the retirement of the former in a year after the opening of the theatre left the entire administrative control in the hands of M. Triqueris and his new associate, M. Ducreé, who, on the death of his partner a few months ago, was succeeded by the present manager, M. Pottin. The *salle* is extremely elegant, and the pieces, though of a secondary order, are generally amusing. The company includes several performers of merit, viz., Messrs. Sévin, Sagedieu, Constant, and Barthélemy; M<sup>mes</sup> Beauchêne, and Pauline Gobert. Two of the most agreeable actresses of this theatre, however, have lately seceded from the *troupe*; we allude to M<sup>lle</sup> Cécile d'Harcourt and M<sup>me</sup> Bergeon; and two others, M<sup>me</sup> Sen and Éléonore, have recently accepted engagements at the Galté.

We give a short selection from the *répertoire*.

Fleur des Champs.  
 Le Ménage de Rigolette.  
 Thérèse la Merrière.  
 Georgina.  
 Le Dimanche d'une Grisette.  
 La Fille du Ciel.  
 L'Oiseau de Paradis.

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## THÉÂTRE BEAUMARCHAIS.

BOULEVARD BEAUMARCHAIS.

*Managers, Messrs. Chabenat and Génard.*

This theatre, which is situated opposite the house once inhabited by Beaumarchais, and which opened December 3, 1835, under the name of Théâtre de la Porte Saint Antoine, has been successively managed by some ten or a dozen directors, one of whom, M. Maurice Alhoy, an author of some reputation, gave it in 1842 the appellation of Théâtre Beaumarchais. The present managers have as yet succeeded better

than any of their predecessors in attracting the public, and since their accession the respectability of the theatre has much improved.

M<sup>lle</sup> Élixa Boigoutier, by whom the *cancon* was first transplanted from the Grande Chaumière and the Prado to the boards of the Variétés, commenced her dramatic career at the Porte Saint Autoine, which theatre indeed has usually boasted a fair average number of pretty actresses. Among the present company are several performers far from deficient in talent, the best perhaps being Messrs. Arthur, Gaston, and Oscar; M<sup>mes</sup> Mésanges, Marie, and Angéline. We can hardly venture to allude to the *répertoire*, the great majority of the pieces produced during the last year having enjoyed a very ephemeral existence; two out of the number, however, are honourable exceptions to the general rule, viz., *les Enfants du Facteur*, a very interesting drama, and *Françoise de Rimini*, a tragedy by M. Christien Ostrowski.

## THÉÂTRE DES JEUNES ÉLÈVES.

PASSAGE CHOISEUL.

*Manager, M. Comte.*

Louis-Christian-Emmanuel Comte, founder and proprietor of this theatre, was born at Geneva, June 28, 1788, and was destined for the law. In 1811 he came to Paris, and established himself in the ancient Théâtre des Jeunes Élèves, where he gave *soirées* of ventriloquism and conjuring (1). In 1814 he was installed in the Hôtel des Fermes, Rue de

(1) M. Comte's powers as a ventriloquist have furnished matter for an infinity of anecdotes, one of which we quote. The celebrated *physicien* is said one day to have fallen in with a peasant woman, leading to market a fine looking pig, which he offered to buy, and for which she asked a hundred francs. Immediately, a voice apparently issuing from the pig's throat declared that he was not worth five francs. A *garde-champêtre*, who chanced to be standing near, proclaimed M. Comte to be a sorcerer, and without any further parley took him, *poysanne*, pig and all, before a magistrate.

The case was stated, to the worthy functionary's no small amazement, when the pig exclaimed in most excellent French that he was happy to have an opportunity of declaring his admiration of so skilful a ventriloquist as Signor Comte. The result of the investigation was the acquittal of our hero, on condition of his giving a performance *gratis* at the theatre that evening. As for the unfortunate pig, he was treated in a far more unceremonious manner, being boiled and cut up next day for the magistrate's dinner.



Grenelle Saint Honoré, and, after removing from thence to the Passage des Panoramas, he eventually (January 23, 1827) opened the present theatre in the Passage Choiseul. There the entertainments mainly consist of short vaudevilles and fairy pieces, varied by occasional feats of conjuring and displays of phantasmagoria by M. Comte himself.

Formerly, the *troupe* was in a great measure composed of children, but now no actor under sixteen and no actress under fifteen years of age are allowed to perform. Several artists of talent, and among others Messrs. E. Taigny, Francisque *jeune*, Hyacinthe, and M<sup>me</sup> Clarisse, and Atala Beauchêne commenced their career in this theatre, which still boasts several promising *élèves*, and particularly Messrs. Alfred, Colbrun, Arquet, Rubel, and M<sup>lle</sup> Léontine, who acts and sings with considerable *entrain*. Some of the pieces are not only very amusing, but very fairly written; and we may especially mention *les Hommes de seize Ans* and *les Jeunes Lions* as agreeable specimens of M. Comte's *répertoire* (1).

## PETIT THÉÂTRE DU LUXEMBOURG.

NEAR THE LUXEMBOURG PALACE.

Manager, M. Alexis Colleville.

This theatre existed many years before the revolution of 1830, and was known by the name of *Théâtre de Bobino*; the entertainments then consisted of rope-dancing and pantomime. Subsequently the performance of vaudevilles was permitted, on condition that the cord used by the rope-dancers should be stretched across the stage during each piece. After the Three Days the Théâtre du Luxembourg, no longer *Bobino*, took its place among the other secondary theatres of the capital, and its existence, hitherto only tolerated, has been recently confirmed by a privilege granted to its new manager, M. Colleville.

Clairville, author of an infinite number of vaudevilles, made his first essay both as an actor and as a writer at this theatre; and among the

(1) A new fairy piece, called *Peau d'Ane*, is now attracting crowds to this pretty little theatre.

*artistes* of celebrity who once trod its boards we may cite Delmas, and M<sup>lle</sup> Clarisse.

Among the cleverest members of the present company are Victor, M<sup>lle</sup> Émilie Lecomte, and M<sup>lle</sup> Grigny. Of the *répertoire* the less said the better: the present manager, however, appears disposed to admit pieces of a somewhat higher order of merit than those produced by his different predecessors.

## THÉÂTRE DES FUNAMBULES.

BOULEVARD DU TEMPLE.

*Manager, M. Billon.*

The origin of this little theatre may be traced to 1816, in which year it first opened on sufferance, the performances consisting of rope-dancing and pantomimes. Since 1830 vaudevilles have been substituted for the rope-dancing, but the pantomime is still by far the most attractive portion of the entertainments. Until lately, the clever and humorous acting of Déburau was a constant source of profit to the management: the recent death, however, of this admirable *Pierrot* (June 15, 1846) (1) has left a void in the company which we fear will not be easily filled up (2).

## THÉÂTRE LAZARI.

BOULEVARD DU TEMPLE.

*Manager, M<sup>me</sup> Auderville (veuve Frénoy).*

Previous to the revolution of 1830, Frénoy, the ex-actor of the Am-

(1) Jean-Gaspard (some say Jean-Baptiste) Déburau was born at Newkolin, in Bohemia, July 31, 1796.

(2) His successor, Paul, is not without talent, but he wants the flexibility of countenance possessed in so eminent a degree by Déburau.

bigu, had acquired the proprietorship of the Théâtre Lazari, the existence of which may be traced as far back as the year 1815. His company then consisted of puppets, whose parts were spoken by a man and woman behind the scenes. After the Three Days, however, real actors were engaged, and both dramas and vaudevilles (which were paid for on an average at the rate of ten francs a-piece) performed. This innovation met with some slight opposition from the authorities; but liberty was then the order of the day, and the same toleration which had been granted to the Luxembourg and the Funambules was eventually accorded to the Théâtre Lazari.

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In our prefatory chapter, we have already mentioned the Hippodrome, as being an arena somewhat similar in form to the Roman amphitheatres, situated outside of the Barrière de l'Étoile: the entertainments given there chiefly consist of horse and chariot races, and steeple-chases, one of the principal performers being Céleste Mogador, celebrated in the annals of the Jardin Mabille.

## CHAPTER XV.

### CONCLUSION.

We purpose devoting this our last chapter to a brief mention of certain miscellaneous subjects connected with the French stage, on which we have not yet touched ; commencing with an account as well of the number of places contained in the different theatres, as of the scale of prices adopted by each.

The Académie Royale, as has been already stated, contains 1,937 places, and the prices vary from two francs and a half to nine francs. When places are secured beforehand, these charges, as is indeed the case in every theatre, are proportionably higher.

The Théâtre Français contains 1,522 places, and the price of admission varies from one franc five sous to six francs sixty centimes.

The price of the cheapest places in the Opéra Comique is one franc, and that of the most expensive seven francs and a half. This theatre can accommodate between 1,500 and 1,600 persons.

The Odéon contains 1,600 places, and the prices vary from seventy-five centimes to six francs.

The Italian Opera has accommodation for 1,800 persons, and the prices are from four to ten francs.

The Vaudeville contains 1,200 places, and the prices vary from one franc to six francs.

The Variétés holds 1,240 persons, and the scale of admission varies from fifty centimes to six francs.

The Gymnase has about 1,200 places, and the prices are from seventy-five centimes to six francs.

The Palais Royal has 930 places; the lowest charge for admission is one franc five sous, and the highest five francs.

The Porte Saint Martin contains 1803 places. Prices of admission from fifty centimes to five francs.

The Ambigu, the Gaité, and the Cirque Olympique contain each about 1800 places, and the prices vary from fifty centimes to five francs.

The lowest charge for admission at the Folies Dramatiques is six sous, and the highest two francs seventy-five centimes.

At the Délassements Comiques the prices are from eight sous to two francs.

The prices at the Théâtre Beaumarchais are from five sous to two francs and a half.

At M. Comte's theatre the charge is from one franc to five francs.

At the Luxembourg from eight sous to one franc five sous.

At the Funambules from five to thirty-five sous.

\* \* \* \* \*

We subjoin the names of some of the theatres which existed in Paris during the Republic and the Consulate, and which were either pulled down, destroyed by fire, or closed in obedience to the decree published by Napoleon in 1807, limiting the number of *salles de spectacle* in the capital to ten.

Théâtre de Monsieur, Rue Feydeau.

Théâtre Louvois, Rue de Louvois.

Théâtre Comique et Lyrique, Rue de Bondy.

Théâtre du Marais, Rue Culture Sainte Catherine.

Théâtre de Molière, Rue Saint Martin.

Théâtre d'Émulation, Rue Notre Dame de Nazareth.

Théâtre de la Concorde, Rue du Renard Saint Merry.

Théâtre des Muses, near the Panthéon.

Théâtre des Champs Elysées.

Théâtre de la Cité (now the *Prado*) near the Palais de Justice.

Théâtre Patriotique, Boulevard du Temple.

Théâtre des Elèves de Thalie, *id.*

Théâtre des Petits Comédiens Français, *id.*

Théâtre du Lycée Dramatique, *id.*

Théâtre du Café Yon, *id.*

Théâtre du Café Godet, *id.*

Théâtre de la Liberté, at the *foire Saint Germain*.

Théâtre du Wauxhall, Boulevard Saint Martin.

Théâtre du Cirque, Palais Royal.

Théâtre des Variétés Comiques, at the *foire Saint Germain*.

Théâtre de Moreau, Palais Royal.

Théâtre de Thalie, rue Saint Antoine.

Théâtre du Café Guillaume.

Théâtre de la Rue des Martyrs.

Cirque d'Astley, Faubourg du Temple.

Théâtre des Amis de la Patrie.

Two wooden theatres in the Place Louis XV. (Place de la Courcorde).

Théâtre des Jeunes Artistes, Rue de Lancry.

Théâtre des Jeunes Elèves, Rue de Thionville.

Théâtre sans Prétention, Rue du Bac.

Théâtre des Troubadours, Rue Chantereine.

Other theatres established since that period, and now closed, are ;

Théâtre de la Renaissance (now the Italian Opera).

Théâtre des Nouveautés (now the Vaudeville).

Le Panorama Dramatique.

Le Panthéon.

Théâtre Saint Marcel.

The number of theatres in the different departments of France (1)

(1) "It is a general rule in certain small provincial theatres," says an amusing writer, "that a piece is never to be called by its real title, unless that title has undergone considerable amplification; and moreover, that the said piece is never to appear twice in the bills under the same name. For example, supposing the piece produced to be *la Tour de Nesle*, the affiche would probably announce it as *les orgies scandaleuses de la Tour de Nesle*; which title might be changed on the next performance of the drama into *les Princesses qui font jeter leurs Amans par la croisée*."

amounts to no less than 320, not including two in Algiers: only twenty-eight towns, however, have permanent *troupes*, the most important of the others being visited each in turn by what are called *troupes d'ar-rondissements*, and the smaller ones by strolling companies. In London, Berlin, Vienna, and indeed in almost every city in Europe, a French theatre has been established; nay more, the *drame* and the *vaudeville*, especially the latter, are now as popular in Rio Janeiro, the Havannah, and Batavia as they are in Paris.

In the olden time, the question of the *droits d'auteur* was easily settled, the author receiving at one payment the price agreed on for his manuscript, which from that moment became the property of the management. In 1653, the actors of the Hôtel de Bourgogne, who had promised Tristan l'Ermite a hundred crowns for a comedy called *les Rivaux*, refused to give more than fifty when they found that the piece was written by Quinault; the latter, however, eventually succeeded in obtaining one ninth of the receipts on each performance of his comedy.

We learn from the same authority that Duinas's *Antony* is often represented as "*Antony, ou le désagrément de n'avoir ni père ni mère.*"

The most curious modifications, however, are those made not in the titles, but in the pieces themselves. Not only do women frequently play men's parts, but if there be a scarcity of ladies in the *troupe*, the *grande coquette* and even the *impérieuse* are occasionally personated by the *jeune premier* or the *pece noble*, so that it is by no means uncommon to see two men go through a love scene, and embrace each other most tenderly, to the great edification of the audience.

Nay more, an actor is often compelled, owing to the incompleteness of the company, to represent two characters in the same piece; in such cases, should both personages chance to be on the stage together, which generally happens at least once in the course of the evening, a scene like the following may be expected to ensue.

"*M. le Comte* says the actor, addressing himself, I am come to demand satisfaction for the insult you have offered me in the person of my daughter."

"Willingly, *M. le Marquis*, name your weapons."

"The sword."

"I choose the pistol."

"The pistol, Sir, is a coward's weapon, and I have a mind to prove it by personally chastising you."

"You will not dare."

"I will."

And the actor boxes his own ears, much to the amusement of the public. When the presence of two hostile armies is required, these are frequently personated by two individuals, who enter, sword or stick in hand, at opposite sides of the stage, and attack each other with great fury; the one who represents the vanquished being paid, in consequence of the hard knocks he has to receive, half a franc more than his adversary. Even with this bonus, however, it is very difficult to find any one who will fight against *l'armée Française*; the actors (or rather supernumeraries) often preferring to personate their own countrymen as volunteers, and without receiving any remuneration for their services beyond the pleasure of thrashing the enemy.

Such was, indeed, the origin of what are now called the *droits d'auteur*, though the means at present adopted of touching the same are not quite so simple. According to the statutes of the Dramatic Authors' Association, first established March 7, 1829, and remodelled December 9, 1837, the *droits* of each member of the association are collected, as well in Paris as in the provinces, by two special agents, who pay themselves for their trouble by deducting two per cent in Paris, and fifteen per cent in the provinces, from the sums received by them. The income arising from these dues, which are payable not only during the lifetime of an author, but for twenty years after his death, is still further increased by the profits derived from the sale of the tickets of admission to which he is entitled on each performance of his pieces (1).

The following is the amount of *droits* paid to authors by the different Parisian theatres.

At the Académie Royale, an opera in five acts is paid for at the rate of 500 francs for each of the first forty representations, and of 200 francs for every subsequent performance. The *droits* for short operas and ballets have been already named in our notice of that theatre.

The Théâtre Français gives one twelfth of the gross receipts for pieces in four and five acts; an eighteenth for those in three acts, and a twenty fourth for those in one or two acts.

The dues paid by the Opéra Comique vary from one sixth to one eighth and a half of the receipts.

At the Odéon, Vaudeville, Variétés, Gymnase, and Palais Royal, authors receive twelve per cent. deducted from the gross receipts.

At the Porte Saint Martin, Ambigu, and Galté, ten per cent.

The Cirque Olympique gives forty francs a-night for important pieces, thirty-six francs a-night for pieces in three acts during the first twenty-five representations, and twenty-four francs afterwards; eighteen francs for pieces in two acts, and thirteen francs for those in one act.

At the Délassemens Comiques, thirty-five francs are paid for three pieces, forty for four, forty five for five, and fifty-four for six.

\* (1) An author has a right to withdraw his piece from one theatre and to give it to another, provided that a year and a day shall have elapsed since it was last performed.



The Théâtre Beaumarchais gives twelve francs for important pieces, eight francs for those in two acts, and five francs for those in one act.

A complete list of the dramatic writers whose productions have enriched and still continue to enrich the *répertoires* of the different Parisian theatres would require more pages than we can well afford lines: a brief alphabetical mention, however, of the leading dramatists, composers, and theatrical critics of the day, exclusive of those already cited, may not be unacceptable to our readers.

Adam (Adolphe), composer of *le Postillon de Lonjumeau*, *Giselle*, *le Chalet*, etc. Born July 24, 1804.

Ancelot, author of *l'Ami Grandet*, *la Dame de l'Empire*, etc. Born January 9, 1794.

Ancelot (M<sup>me</sup>), authoress of *Marie*, *Loisa*, *Hernance*, etc. (1).

Anicet Bourgeois, author of *le Docteur Noir*, *le Temple de Salomon*, etc.

Anne (Théodore), author of the *libretto* of *Marie Stuart*.

Arago (Etienne), author in part of *les Mémoires du Diable*.

Arago (Jacques), the celebrated blind critic, author of *Oui ou Non*.

Arlincourt (le Vicomte d'), author of several tragedies, and of a drama, called *la Peste Noire*.

Auber, composer of *la Muette*, *le Domino Noir*, *Fra Diavolo*, *la Part du Diable*, *les Diamans de la Couronne*, *la Sirène*, etc. (2)

Augier (Emile), author of *la Cigale*.

Balzac (H. de), author of *Vautrin*. Born 1797.

Bayard, author of *le Gamin de Paris*, *le Mari à la Campagne*, *Marie Mignot*, etc. Born March 17, 1796. (3)

(1) M<sup>me</sup> Ancelot was born at Dijon early in the present century. Besides the pieces above mentioned, she is also authoress of *Marguerite*, *Isabelle*, *le Château de ma Nièce*, etc.; some of her productions having been represented at the Théâtre Français, and others at the Odéon and the Vaudeville. As a novelist she enjoys a high reputation, nor is she less successful with the pen than with the pen, two large pictures by herself, containing portraits of most of the celebrated literary characters of the day, being among the principal ornaments of her *salon*.

(2) Auber is a native of Caen, and was born January 29, 1784; he has also composed among many other operas *le Moïse*, *le Philtre*, *le Château de Brouse*, *le Serment*, and *l'Amour et la Haine*.

(3) Bayard is one of the most prolific dramatic writers of the present day. His works almost equal in number those of Scribe himself, and some of them have obtained a popularity little inferior to that enjoyed by *le Mariage de raison* and *le Vierge d'Édouard*.

- Beauplan (Amédée de), author of *Deux Filles à Marier*.  
 Bérat (Frédéric), composer of *la Lisette de Béranger*.  
 Bouchardy, author of *le Sonneur de Saint-Paul*, etc.  
 Briffault (Eugène), a clever critic, born December 31, 1799.  
 Carmouche, author of *la Neige, la Servante Justifiée*.  
 Clairville, author of *l'Abbé Galant, Satan, les Trois Loges, le Troisième Mari*, etc. (1)  
 Comberousse, author of *la Polka en Province*.  
 Cormon, author of *le Roman Comique*.  
 D'Ennery, author of *Don César de Bazan, Marie Jeanne*, etc.  
 Dumanoir, author of *Gentil Bernard*, etc. Born July 30, 1808.  
 Dumas (Alexandre), author of *la Tour de Nesle, Richard d'Arington, Antony, Mademoiselle de Belle-Isle, les Trois Mousquetaires*, etc. Born June 24, 1803.  
 Dumersan, author of *les Saltimbanques, Victorine*, etc. Born January 4, 1780.  
 Dupeuty, author of *Pierre le Rouge, Madelon Friquet*.  
 Duvert, author of *l'Homme Blasé, Renaudin de Coen*, etc. Born January 13, 1795.  
 Empis, author of *la Mère et la Fille*.  
 Fiorentino, a most able and *spirituel* critic.  
 Flotow, composer of *l'Ame en Peine* and *Stradella*.  
 Galoppe d'Onquaire, author of *Une Femme de Quarante Ans*.  
 Gautier (Théophile) author of *le Tricorne Enchanté*.  
 Girardin (M<sup>re</sup> Emile de), authoress of *Judith*.  
 Gozlan (Léon), author of *la Main Droite et la Main Gauche*. Born 1806.  
 Guinot (Eugène), the admirable critic of the *Siècle*. Born April 8, 1807.  
 Halévy, composer of *la Juive, la Reine de Chypre, Charles VI., les Mousquetaires de la Reine*, etc. Born 1809.  
 Hugo (Victor), author of *Ruy Blas, Lucrèce Borgia, Marie Tudor, Angelo*, etc. Born 1803.  
 Janin (Jules), the celebrated critic of the *Débats*. Born 1804.

(1) Clairville was born in Paris January 28, 1811. He has written upwards of a hundred pieces, of which perhaps the best are those mentioned above.

- Karr (Alphonse), a clever author and critic. Born 1808.
- Kock (Paul de), author of *Un Turlourou*, *Moustache*, *la Lanterne de Montfermeil*, *la Place Ventadour*, etc.
- Lafont (Charles), author of *la Famille Moronval*.
- Lauzaune, author of *Un Scandale*, *Harnali*. Born November 4, 1805.
- Laya (Léon), author of *l'Etourneau*, *Un Poisson d'Abril*, etc.
- Leuven (A. de), author of *les Quatre Fils Aymon*, *le Diable à Quatre*.
- Lockroy, author of *Passé Minuit*, *Un Duel sous Richelieu*, etc.
- Lucas (Hippolyte), author of *le Tisserand de Ségovie*.
- Mary Lafon, author of *le Chevalier de Pomponne*, *l'Oncle de Normandie*.
- Masson (Michel), author of *le Télégraphe d'Amour*.
- Mélesville, author of *Elle est Folle*, *Michel Perrin*, etc. Born November 13, 1788.
- Merle, a celebrated critic, and author of *Prévile et Tacconnet*, etc. Born June 16, 1785.
- Ponroy (Arthur), author of *le Vieux Consul*.
- Ponsard, author of *Lucrece*.
- Pyat (Félix), author of *Diogene*.
- Roger de Beauvoir, author of several successful pieces.
- Rolle (Hippolyte), a clever critic. Born 1800.
- Romand (Hippolyte), author of *Catherine II.*, and *le Bourgeois de Gand*.
- Saint-Georges, author of *les Mousquetaires de la Reine*, *la Gipsy*.
- Scribe (Eugène), author of *le Verre d'Eau*, *Une Chaine*, *Fra Diavolo*, *la Muette*, *le Mariage de Raison*, *l'Image*, *Jeanne et Jeanneton*, *Generièce*, etc., etc. Born December 24, 1791.
- Soulié (Frédéric), author of *le Proscrit*, *Diane de Chirry*, *les Amans de Murcie*, etc. Born December 23, 1800.
- Souvestre (Emile), author of *Charlotte*, *le Mousse*, *Un Homme Grave*.
- Spontini, composer of *la Vestale*, *Ali Baba*, etc. Born 1778.
- Sue (Eugène), author of *La tréauumont*, *Mathilde*.
- Thomas (Ambroise), composer of *le Panier Fleuri*, *Mina*. Born August 5, 1811.
- Vanderburck (Emile de), author of *Cotillon III.* Born September 30, 1794.

Varin, author of *le Tourtourou*. Born 1798.

Vigny (Count Alfred de), author of *Chatterton*, *la Maréchale d'Ancre*, etc. Born March 27, 1799.

No piece is allowed to be performed in Paris without being first subjected to the approval or disapproval of the *Comité de la Censure*: this is composed of four examiners, whose opinions respecting the different productions submitted to them are either confirmed or rejected by the Minister of the Interior. In the provinces the *préfets* have the power of permitting the representation of pieces which have not been performed in Paris, and even of forbidding the production of those which have been approved of by the *censure*.

During the last seven years 4,119 pieces have been examined by the *censure*: of these 2,045 have been performed without alteration, 1,945 have undergone changes more or less important, and 129 have been rejected altogether.

The theatre has its own peculiar language, or *argot*, as it is termed, which is as difficult of comprehension to the uninitiated as are the idioms of the *Choucrineur* in the *Mystères de Paris*, and the mysterious jargon of Turpin's comrades in *Rookwood*.

We give a few specimens.

*Avoir de l'agrément*, signifies to be applauded.

*Battre les ailes*, means to gesticulate incessantly.

*Battre le job*, to lose one's memory.

*Coulevares*, unimportant parts.

*Détailler le couplet*, to say instead of singing the couplet, so as to make every point tell. Arnal does this to perfection.

*Egayer*, to hiss slightly.

*Empoigner une pièce*, to hiss.

*Enfoncer dans le troisième dessous*, to hiss down an actor or piece.

*Enlever*, to applaud enthusiastically.

*Faire clambrière*, to attract the public.

*Faire poser*, to mystify.

*Faire de la toile*, to stop short in the middle of a part, and be unable to say a word.

*Gratter au foyer*, to be left out of the cast of several pieces successively. (1)

*Loge*, an actor or actress's dressing-room. (2)

*Manger sa côtelette*, to have a brilliant success.

*Mousser*, to puff.

*Passer* is often used in the following sense. *La pièce passera demain*, i. e. will be produced to-morrow.

*Planter un acte*, to put into rehearsal.

*Rue*, the space between two *coulisses*.

*Recevoir son morceau de sucre*, to be applauded on coming on.

*Soigner une pièce or un acteur*, like *soutenir* and *chauffer*, is a phrase addressed to the *claque* when any unusual exertion on their part is required.

*Tirer la ficelle*, to sing out of tune.

*Vedette (mettre en)*, to print an actor's name in the bills in larger letters than those of his comrades.

As it is possible that many of our readers may at some time or other be desirous of visiting the different Parisian theatres, a brief enumeration of the best *artistes* in each company, as well as of the pieces in which they are seen to the greatest advantage, may perhaps be found acceptable.

(1) The origin of this term has been traced to an actor of the *Comédie italienne*, who, being seldom entrusted with any important character, and having little else to do, used to amuse himself by scatching the walls of the *foyer*, while waiting there in expectation of being given a part.

(2) In most Parisian theatres the principal performers have each a separate *loge*. The actors and actresses of the Palais Royal, however, with, we believe, the simple exception of M<sup>lle</sup> Nathalie, are compelled to dress two or three in a room, space being too valuable in that little theatre to admit of any more exclusive accommodation. At the Vaudeville not only the leading actresses, but also the principal actors, namely Arnal, Amant, Bardou, Félix, Leclère, and Hippolyte have separate dressing-rooms; that of Amant is very neatly furnished, and the walls are ornamented with well-executed paintings and drawings. The *loge* of M<sup>me</sup> Doche, though small, is fitted up so tastefully and with such attention to comfort as to resemble a miniature *boudoir*; those of the other actresses, on the contrary, contain, generally speaking, little more furniture than is absolutely necessary.

## ACADÉMIE ROYALE.

## OPERA.

Duprez, in *Guillaume Tell, la Juive, la Favorite*.  
 Barroilhet, in *Charles I<sup>r</sup>, la Reine de Chypre, la Favorite*.  
 Gardoni, in *Robert le Diable, l'Ame en Peine*.  
 M<sup>me</sup> Stoltz, in *la Favorite, la Reine de Chypre, Charles I<sup>r</sup>*.  
 M<sup>lle</sup> Nau, in *Lucie de Lammermoor, le Philtre, l'Ame en Peine*.

## BALLET.

Petipa, in *la Péri*.  
 Mazillier, in *le Diable à Quatre*.  
 M<sup>lle</sup> Carlotta Grisi, in *Giselle, la Péri, le Diable à Quatre*.  
 M<sup>lle</sup> Maria, in *la Muette de Portici, le Diable à Quatre*.  
 M<sup>lles</sup> S. and A. Dumilâtre, in *Lady Henriette*.  
 M<sup>lle</sup> Plunkett, in *Robert le Diable, le Dieu et la Bayadère*.

## THÉÂTRE FRANÇAIS.

Samson, in *la Belle Mère et le Gendre, la Camaraderie*.  
 Regnier, in *Une Chatne, le Mari à la Campagne, Oscar*.  
 Provost, in *la Famille Poisson, le Mari à la Campagne*.  
 Ligier, in *les Enfants d'Edouard, Louis XI*.  
 Beauvallet, in *Oreste, Polyencte, le Cid, les Horaces*.  
 M<sup>lle</sup> Rachel, in *Andromaque, les Horaces, l'Irvinie, Mithridate*.  
 M<sup>me</sup> Desmousseaux, in *le Mari à la Campagne*.  
 M<sup>lle</sup> Mante, in *le Ferre d'Eau*.  
 M<sup>me</sup> Volnys, in *Marie, Louise de Lignerolles, la Femme de Quarante Ans*.  
 M<sup>lle</sup> Brohun, in *le Legs, le Bourgeois Gentilhomme*.  
 M<sup>lle</sup> Anaïs, in *les Enfants d'Edouard, l'Ecole des Maris*.

## OPÉRA COMIQUE.

Chollet, in *Fra Diavolo, le Nouveau Seigneur*.



Roger, in *la Sirène, les Mousquetaires de la Reine, la Part du Diable, la Dame Blanche*.

Hermann Léon, in *les Mousquetaires de la Reine, l'Eau Merveilleuse*.

Mocker, in *le Déserteur*.

M<sup>lle</sup> Lavoye, in *la Sirène, le Domino Noir*.

M<sup>lle</sup> Darcier, in *Cendrillon, le Maçon*.

M<sup>lle</sup> Prévost, in *le Maître de Chapelle*.

M<sup>lle</sup> Delille, in *la Dame Blanche*.

#### OPÉON.

Bocage, in *Diogène, Echec et Mat*.

#### ITALIAN OPÉRA.

Lablaache, in *Elisir d'Amore, Don Pasquale, la Rinnyata*.

Mario, in *Lucia, Linda di Chamouni, Il Pirata*.

Ronconi, in *Nabucco, Maria di Rohan*.

M<sup>me</sup> Crisi, in *Norma, Semiramide, Don Pasquale*.

M<sup>me</sup> Persiani, in *Il Barbiere, Lucia, Elisir d'Amore*.

M<sup>me</sup> Brambilla (Marietta), in *Semiramide, Linda di Chamouni*.

#### VAUDEVILLE.

Arnal, in *Passé Minuit, Riche d'Amour, l'Homme Blasé*.

Amant, in *les Mémoires du Diable*.

Félix, in *les Mémoires du Diable, Marguerite, la Polka en Province*.

Bardou, in *Passé Minuit, les Mémoires du Diable*.

Leclère, in *Riche d'Amour*.

M<sup>me</sup> Albert, in *Un Duel sous Richelieu, Une Dame de l'Empire*.

M<sup>me</sup> Doche, in *les Trois Loges, l'Extase, Satan, les Mémoires du Diable*.

M<sup>me</sup> Guillemain, in *Renaudin le Corn, le Mari de la Dame de Chaus*.

M<sup>me</sup> Thénard, in *Marguerite, Un Monsieur et Une Dame*.

M<sup>me</sup> Castellan, in *les Fleurs anémées*.

M<sup>lle</sup> Ozy, in *l'Île de Robinson*.

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#### VARIÉTÉS.

Bouffé, in *le Gamin de Paris, les Fleurs Péchés, la Fille de l'Avare*.

Hoffmann, in *Gentil Bernard*.

Hyacinthe, in *le Maître d'École*.

Lafont, in *le Capitaine Roquefinette, le Chevalier de Saint-Georges*.

Lepeintre aîné, in *le Bénéficiaire*.

Lepeintre jeune, in *Jacquot*.

Vernet, in *le Père de la Débutante, l'Homme qui bat sa Femme*.

Odry, in *l'Ours et le Pacha*.

M<sup>lle</sup> Déjazet, in *les Premières Armes de Richelieu, Gentil Bernard*.

M<sup>lle</sup> Flore, in *Madame Panache, les Enfants de Troupe*.

M<sup>lle</sup> Judith, in *la Fille de l'Avare*.

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#### GYMNASÉ.

Achard, in *la Famille du Fumiste, la Fie en Partie Double*.

Bressant, in *Clarisse Harlowe*.

Tisserant, in *la Belle et la Bête*.

Numa, in *Geneviève, Jeanne et Jeanneton, Madame de Cérigny*.

Klein, in *Un Changement de Main*.

Ferville, in *la Lectrice, la Chanoinesse*.

Geoffroy, in *les Trois Péchés du Diable*.

M<sup>lle</sup> Rose Chéri, in *Clarisse Harlowe, Un Changement de Main, Geneviève*.

M<sup>lle</sup> Désirée, in *Un Tuteur de Vingt Ans, Jeanne et Jeanneton*.

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#### PALAIS ROYAL.

Levassor, in *Brelan de Troupiers, Un Poisson d'Avril*.



Ravel, in *la Rue de la Lune, l'Inventeur de la Poudre, l'Étourneau*.  
 Sainville, in *la Rue de la Lune, l'Inventeur de la Poudre*.  
 Tousez (Alcide), in *le Roi des Frontins*.  
 Leménil, in *le Major Cravachon*.  
 Grassot, in *la Femme Electrique, la Garde-Malade*.  
 M<sup>lle</sup> Nathalie, in *la Fille de Figaro*.

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#### PORTE SAINT MARTIN.

Frédéric Lemaitre, in *Don César de Bazan, la Dame de Saint-Tropez, Ruy Blas, Trente Ans*.  
 Jemma, in *Marie Jeanne, Ruy Blas*.  
 Clarence, in *les Deux Serruriers*.  
 Raucourt, in *la Duchesse de La Fausbailière, les Deux Serruriers*.  
 M<sup>lle</sup> Clarisse Miroy, in *Don César de Bazan, Marie Jeanne, le Docteur Noir*.

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#### AMBIGU COMIQUE.

Montdidier, in *la Closerie des Genêts*.  
 Chilly, in *les Bohémiens de Paris, l'Abbaye de Castro, les Mousquetaires*.  
 Matis, in *les Bohémiens de Paris*.  
 M<sup>me</sup> Guyon, in *le Marché de Londres*.  
 M<sup>me</sup> Naptal-Arnault, in *la Closerie des Genêts*.

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#### GAITÉ.

Albert, in *Alar Gull, Madeleine*.  
 Delaistre, in *le Canal Saint-Martin*.  
 Deshayes, in *Victorine, le Temple de Salomon*.  
 Serres, in *Victorine, le Château des Sept Tours*.  
 Francisque, in *la Grâce de Dieu*.

M<sup>me</sup> Abit, in *Madeleine*.

M<sup>lle</sup> Sara Félix, in *Icturine*.

M<sup>lle</sup> Léontine, in *la Grâce de Dieu*, *Margot*.

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## CIRQUE OLYMPIQUE.

Gauthier, in *Murat*.

Dupuis, in *l'Empire*.

—

## CIRQUE DES CHAMPS ÉLYSÉES.

Baucher, on *Partisan*.

Auriol, in *le Tremplin*, and *l'Équilibre des Boutelles*.

Ducrow.

Leclair.

M<sup>lle</sup> Caroline Loyo, on *Rutler*.

M<sup>lle</sup> Camille Leroux, in *l'Ecosais et la Sytphide*.

—

## THÉÂTRE MONTPENSIER.

Mélingue.

Boutin.

M<sup>me</sup> J. Rey.

—

## FOLIES DRAMATIQUES.

Potier (Charles). in *Je fais mes Farces*.

Palaisenu, in *les Premières Armes du Diable*.

Armand Villot, in *Michel*.

M<sup>lle</sup> Leroux, in *la Modiste au Camp*.

M<sup>me</sup> Charles Potier, in *A la Belle Étoile*.

## DÉLASSEMENTS COMIQUES.

Sévin, in *le Dimanche d'une Grisette*.

Sagedieu, in *l'Oiseau de Paradis*.

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 HIPPODROME.

Franconi (Laurent).

M<sup>lle</sup> Céleste.

M<sup>lle</sup> Kenebel.

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Our task is now at an end; we have endeavoured in this and the foregoing chapters to give our readers some idea of the present state of theatricals in Paris; and however imperfectly we may have succeeded in our attempt, it has not the less been to us "a labour of love."

From the constant changes daily, nay, hourly taking place in the administration and organisation of the different theatres, one cannot hope to arrive at anything like perfect correctness in a work of this kind: we trust, nevertheless, that we have neglected no means of rendering our information as exact up to the time of publication as possible.

We have abstained from giving any opinion relative to the comparative state of prosperity of the drama in France and in other countries, and more especially in England; nor have we judged it expedient to inflict on our readers the result of any speculations on the subject. Our aim has been to interest and to amuse them, and it would be a source of real gratification to us could we persuade ourselves that this our sole object in writing these pages had been even partially attained.

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## ERRATA.

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Page 10, line 18, for *on 27 October*, read *on October 27*.

— 13, line 27, for *as to Albert*, read *as for Albert*.

— 86, line 5, for *withall*, read *with all*.

— 114, line 20, for *ner*, read *her*.

— 146, line 1, for *Bloneal*, read *Boneal*.

— 150, line 1, for *basso*, read *baryton*.

— 164, line 21, for *from*, read *by*.

— 171, lines 22 and 23, for *Dussert, Doche*, read *Dussert Doche*.

— 201, line 27, for *voyegeuse*, read *voyageuse*.

— 217, line 30, for *A la gloir' au plaisir*, read *A la gloir', au plaisir*.

## ADDENDA.

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(Since the first publication of this work, the following changes, etc., have taken place. While recording them, we also avail ourselves of the present opportunity to correct sundry errors and misstatements in the foregoing pages, which have been kindly pointed out to us.)

ACADÉMIE ROYALE. — M. Habeneck is succeeded as *chef d'orchestre* by M. Girard. Messrs. Gardoni, Arnoux, Mathieu and Théodore, and M<sup>mes</sup> Flora Fahhri and Théodore, no longer form part of the company. M<sup>lles</sup> Plunkett and Robert have been recently promoted to the rank of *premiers sujets*, and M. Charles Ponchard, formerly a *pensionnaire* of the Théâtre Français, and son of the celebrated singer of the Opéra Comique, has been engaged. Anconi's *début* is expected to take place immediately in *Robert Bruce*.

THÉÂTRE FRANÇAIS. — The company has been lately reinforced by the engagements of Rey, M<sup>lles</sup> Doze and Judith : the last-named actress made a successful *début*, Nov. 30, as *Emma* in *la Fille d'Honneur*. In our biographical notice of M<sup>lle</sup> Rachel, we omitted to state the well-known fact that the first person by whom the brilliant *avenir* of this great actress was foretold, even during her stay at the Gymnase, was the eminent critic of the *Débats*, M. Jules Janin; who also, on her subsequent engagement at the Théâtre Français, warmly advocated her merits, and had the satisfaction of seeing the whole press speedily follow his example.

Maillart has been recently admitted among the *sociétaires*.

OPÉRA COMIQUE. — Grard and Moreau Sainti have recently made their *rentrée* at this theatre, from which M<sup>mes</sup> Darcier, Duval, Rouillet and St. Ange have seceded. We have also to record the very promising *débuts* of M<sup>lles</sup> Grimm and Levasseur, the former of whom first appeared, Nov. 4, as *Carlo* in *la Part du Diable*, and the latter, Nov. 26, as *la Catarina* in *les Diamans de la Couronne*. In *Gibby la Cornemuse*, Roger has achieved a new and brilliant triumph.

OPÉON. — In addition to the performers spoken of in our notice of

this theatre, the following also deserve mention ; Messrs. Gaspari, Delaunay (a most excellent *jeune premier*, who is said to be engaged at the Théâtre Français), Henry, Baptiste and Roger, M<sup>me</sup> Frantzia and Eugénie Corès. M<sup>lle</sup> Araldi, a tragic actress whose merits have been singularly overrated, is also a member of the company.

ITALIAN OPERA. — Coletti sang for the first time at this theatre, Oct. 3, as *Assur* in *Semiramide*, with great and deserved success; and shortly after, Oct. 29, M<sup>lle</sup> Peppina Brambilla appeared in *Nabucco*. M<sup>lle</sup> Landi and Librandi are replaced by M<sup>lle</sup> Corbari and Albini. Malvezzi is not re-engaged, but *en revanche* Gardoni has made a most brilliant *début* (Dec. 10), as *Nemorino* in *l'Elisir d'Amore*.

VAUDEVILLE. — M. Lockroy has succeeded M. Cogniard as manager of this theatre under very favourable auspices, two out of the three first pieces produced since his accession having been extremely well received, and the third, *Trénitz*, having escaped absolute condemnation thanks to the excellent acting of Amant and Pierron. We are happy to add that the latter *artiste* is making rapid advances in public estimation.

The following actresses, mentioned in the preceding pages as forming part of the company, are no longer attached to the Vaudeville : M<sup>me</sup> Albert (who is reported to be engaged at the Théâtre Montpensier) M<sup>me</sup> Atala Beauchêne, Castellan, Frantz, Liévenne, and Pauline Mayer. On the other hand, we have to record the *rentrée* of M<sup>lle</sup> Figeac, which took place Nov. 13, as *Honorine* in *le Bonhomme Job*, and the *début* of M<sup>lle</sup> Armande (Nov. 22), as *Rosine* in *Deux Filles à Marier*. Neuville has also been engaged, and first appeared Dec. 12, as *Ponsif* in *la Planète à Paris*, the *revue* of the year, in which his imitations of Numa, Ravel, Alcide Tousez, and Bouffé are remarkably clever. Arnal and Bardou have enriched their respective *répertoires* with *le Capitaine de Voleurs* and *le Bonhomme Job* ; in the latter of which pieces Tétard sustained the part of a young shepherd in a very spirited and humorous manner.

Is it necessary to add that M<sup>me</sup> Doche, in her creations of *Pierrette* in *le Bonhomme Job*, of *Armande* in *le Capitaine de Voleurs*, and of *la Planète* in *la Planète à Paris*, has again displayed that rare perfection of beauty, grace and talent which *la Reine du Vaudeville* alone possesses? One *couplet* especially in *la Planète à Paris* is sung by her with such exquisite taste, simplicity and pathos, as to remind many a veteran play-goer of the happiest efforts of M<sup>me</sup> Gavaudan.

VARIÉTÉS. — M<sup>lle</sup> Anna Grave, Judith and Pitron no longer form part of the company. M<sup>lle</sup> Saint-Marc first appeared October 29, as

*Sophie* in *Souvenir* (a charming creation, worthy of a better piece), and M<sup>lle</sup> Constance November 14, as *Isabelle* in *le Chevalier du Guet*. Rollin, a comic actor of some promise, has recently made his *début*, and *Pierre Férier*, a neatly written little drama, played in a most artistic and effective manner by Bouffé, has been favourably received.

GYMNASÉ. — M<sup>lle</sup> Irma Aubry and Vallée have seceded from the *troupe*. M<sup>lle</sup> Chollet, a daughter of the celebrated singer of the Opéra Comique, made a successful *début* October 17, in *l'Héritière*. A charming little comedy by Scribe, *la Protégée sans le savoir*, has added another delightful creation to M<sup>lle</sup> Rose Chéri's *répertoire*; and *Simplex*, a piece of indifferent merit, has been well received, owing to the charming *espiglerie* of M<sup>lle</sup> Désirée, who is excellently supported by Klein, Tisserant, and M<sup>lle</sup> Anna Chéri. Nor must we forget *l'Article 213*, a new triumph for Numa.

PALAIS ROYAL. — A most amusing *revue*, entitled *la Poudre de Coton*, has been lately produced here, the cast of which includes almost every principal *artiste* in the company.

PORTE SAINT MARTIN. — We are glad to announce the re-engagement of the pretty M<sup>lle</sup> Andréa, who made her *rentrée* October 26, as *Diane de Chivry*. M<sup>lle</sup> Halley has also been playing *Marguerite* in *la Tour de Nesle* with success; and M<sup>lle</sup> Grave, by her charming performance of the heroine in *la Juive de Constantine*, has taken her stand among the most promising *jeunes premières* in the capital.

The English artists from the Hall of Rome, representing the *Tableaux Vivants*, have proved for several months a source of great attraction to the public, and of profit to the treasury.

AMBIGU. — Montdidier first appeared at this theatre October 14, as *Montéclair* in *la Closerie des Genêts*, one of the best written and best acted dramas ever produced on the French stage. Ballande also made a very successful *début* November 8, as *Ébérard* in M. Antony Béraud's excellent drama of *le Fou*. Other actors of the company, omitted in our former notice, are Messrs. Acille Machanette, Lauré, Didier, Flcury, and M<sup>lle</sup> Garnier.

The anecdote related of M. Béraud (p. 328), and inserted in the present work on the authority of a French writer, is entirely without foundation, and we are happy to have an opportunity of stating our regret at having published it. We also owe the worthy manager of the Ambigu some apology for having mentioned him as being author of several dramas, a term by no means appropriate to a writer whose dramatic works alone amount to 180 pieces, among which, besides

those already spoken of, we may cite *Cardillac*, *Cagliostro*, *Faust*, *Napoléon*, and *le Miracle des Roses*.

GAITÉ. — M<sup>lle</sup> Sara Félix, who is said to be engaged at the Ambigu, has recently proved herself worthy to be the sister of M<sup>lle</sup> Rachel, by her spirited performance of *Rita l'Espagnole*. M<sup>lle</sup> Marie-Clarisse, a grand-daughter of M<sup>me</sup> Desbrosses, formerly *sociétaire* of the Opéra Comique, made a successful *début* December 12, as *Thérèse* in *Georges et Thérèse*.

CINQUE OLYMPIQUE. — In our account of this theatre we unintentionally omitted the name of Chéri Louis, one of the best, if not the very best actor in the company, and the representative *par excellence* of Napoléon.

THÉÂTRE MONTPENSIER. — We erred in giving the name of M. Alexandre Dumas as proprietor of this theatre, the real owners being a company of shareholders, whose interests are represented by M. Védel. The management is exclusively in the hands of M. Hippolyte Hostein. The following list of the company has lately been published :

Messrs. Mélingue, Rouvière, Saint-Léon, Bignon, Lacressonnière, Derosselle, Boutin, Hiéllard, Boileau, Barré, Beaulieu, Crette, Fillion, Georges, Alex. Peupin, Cabot, Lingé, Henry-Armand, Bar, Alexandre, Colbrun, Castel, Lefebvre ; M<sup>me</sup> Perrier, Rey, Atala Beauchêne, Person, Fontenay, Maillet, Laigmelet, Bardet, Mathilde Payre, Launay, and M<sup>lle</sup> Georges cadette.

DÉLASSEMENTS COMIQUES. — Messrs. Ducreé and Lajariette have succeeded M. Pottin in the management. In our enumeration of the best *artistes* of the company, we omitted to mention Markais, Émile, M<sup>me</sup>s Amélie Brière, Caroline Bader, Fély Leroux, and Virginie Mercier.









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